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# We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century

## Report of the Secretary-General

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# I. New century, new challenges

1. The arrival of the new millennium is an occasion for celebration and reflection.

2. The world did celebrate as the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve, in one time zone after another, from Kiribati and Fiji westward around the globe to Samoa. People of all cultures joined in — not only those for whom the millennium might be thought to have a special significance. The Great Wall of China and the Pyramids of Giza were lit as brightly as Manger Square in Bethlehem and St. Peter's Square in Rome. Tokyo, Jakarta and New Delhi joined Sydney, Moscow, Paris, New York, Rio de Janeiro and hundreds of other cities in hosting millennial festivities. Children's faces reflected the candlelight from Spitsbergen in Norway to Robben Island in South Africa. For 24 hours the human family celebrated its unity through an unprecedented display of its rich diversity.

3. The Millennium Summit affords an opportunity for reflection. The General Assembly convened this gathering of Heads of State and Government to address the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Both the occasion and the subject require us to step back from today's headlines and take a broader, longer-term view — of the state of the world and the challenges it poses for this Organization.

4. There is much to be grateful for. Most people today can expect to live longer than their parents, let alone their more remote ancestors. They are better nourished, enjoy better health, are better educated, and on the whole face more favourable economic prospects.

5. There are also many things to deplore, and to correct. The century just ended was disfigured, time and again, by ruthless conflict. Grinding poverty and striking inequality persist within and among countries even amidst unprecedented wealth. Diseases, old and new, threaten to undo painstaking progress. Nature's life-sustaining services, on which our species depends for its survival, are being seriously disrupted and degraded by our own everyday activities.

6. The world's people look to their leaders, when they gather at the Millennium Summit, to identify and act on the major challenges ahead.

7. The United Nations can succeed in helping to meet those challenges only if all of us feel a renewed sense of mission about our common endeavour. We need to remind ourselves why the United Nations exists — for what, and for whom. We also need to ask ourselves what kind of United Nations the world's leaders are prepared to support, in deeds as well as words. Clear answers are necessary to energize and focus the Organization's work in the decades ahead. It is those answers that the Millennium Summit must provide.

8. Of course, the United Nations exists to serve its Member States. It is the only body of its kind with universal membership and comprehensive scope, and encompassing so many areas of human endeavour. These features make it a uniquely useful forum — for sharing information, conducting negotiations, elaborating norms and voicing expectations, coordinating the behaviour of states and other actors, and pursuing common plans of action. We must ensure that the United Nations performs these functions as efficiently and effectively as possible.

9. The United Nations is more than a mere tool, however. As its Charter makes clear, the United Nations was intended to introduce new principles into international relations, making a qualitative difference to their day-to-day conduct. The Charter's very first Article defines our purposes: resolving disputes by peaceful means; devising cooperative solutions to economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems; and broadly encouraging behaviour in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. In other words, quite apart from whatever practical tasks the United Nations is asked to perform, it has the avowed purpose of transforming relations among states, and the methods by which the world's affairs are managed.

10. Nor is that all. For even though the United Nations is an organization of states, the Charter is written in the name of "we the peoples". It reaffirms the dignity and worth of the human person, respect for human rights and the equal rights of men and women, and a commitment to social progress as measured by better standards of life, in freedom from want and fear alike. Ultimately, then, the United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of people everywhere.

11. For its first 45 years, the United Nations lived in the grip of the cold war, prevented from fulfilling some

of its core missions but discovering other critical tasks in that conflict's shadow. For 10 years now, the United Nations has been buffeted by the tumultuous changes of the new era, doing good work in many instances but falling short in others. Now, the Millennium Summit offers the world's leaders an unparalleled opportunity to reshape the United Nations well into the twenty-first century, enabling it to make a real and measurable difference to people's lives.

12. I respectfully submit the present report to Member States to facilitate their preparations for the Summit and to stimulate their subsequent deliberations at the Summit. The report identifies some of the pressing challenges faced by the world's people that fall within the United Nations ambit. It proposes a number of priorities for Member States to consider, and it recommends several immediate steps that we can take at the Summit itself, to lift people's spirits and improve their lives.

13. All these proposals are set in the context of globalization, which is transforming the world as we enter the twenty-first century. In this new era, people's actions constantly — if often unwittingly — affect the lives of others living far away. Globalization offers great opportunities, but at present its benefits are very unevenly distributed while its costs are borne by all.

14. Thus the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people, instead of leaving billions of them behind in squalor. Inclusive globalization must be built on the great enabling force of the market, but market forces alone will not achieve it. It requires a broader effort to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity.

15. That in turn requires that we think afresh about how we manage our joint activities and our shared interests, for many challenges that we confront today are beyond the reach of any state to meet on its own. At the national level we must govern better, and at the international level we must learn to govern better together. Effective states are essential for both tasks, and their capacity for both needs strengthening. We must also adapt international institutions, through which states govern together, to the realities of the new era. We must form coalitions for change, often with partners well beyond the precincts of officialdom.

16. No shift in the way we think or act can be more critical than this: we must put people at the centre of everything we do. No calling is more noble, and no responsibility greater, than that of enabling men, women and children, in cities and villages around the world, to make their lives better. Only when that begins to happen will we know that globalization is indeed becoming inclusive, allowing everyone to share its opportunities.

17. We must do more than talk about our future, however. We must start to create it, now. Let the Millennium Summit signal the renewed commitment of Member States to their United Nations, by agreeing on our common vision. Let the world's leaders prove their commitment by acting on it as soon as they return home.

## II. Globalization and governance

18. In the early years of the United Nations, the General Assembly's timely adjournment could be predicted with precision: its absolute limit was fixed by the year's last voyage of the *Queen Mary*. That world, clearly, was a very different place from today's.

19. Indeed, when the United Nations was founded two thirds of the current Members did not exist as sovereign states, their people still living under colonial rule. The planet hosted a total population of fewer than 2.5 billion, compared to 6 billion today. Trade barriers were high, trade flows minuscule and capital controls firmly in place. Most big companies operated within a single country and produced for their home market. The cost of transoceanic telephone calls was prohibitive for the average person and limited even business use to exceptional circumstances. The annual output of steel was a prized symbol of national economic prowess. The world's first computer had just been constructed; it filled a large room, bristled with 18,000 electron tubes and half a million solder joints, and had to be physically rewired for each new task. Ecology was a subject confined to the study of biology, and references to cyberspace would not have been found even in science fiction.

20. We know how profoundly things have changed. World exports have increased tenfold since 1950, even after adjusting for inflation, consistently growing faster than world GDP. Foreign investment has risen more rapidly; sales by multinational firms exceed world exports by a growing margin, and transactions among corporate affiliates are a rapidly expanding segment of world trade. Foreign exchange flows have soared to more than $1.5 trillion daily, up from $15 billion in 1973 when the regime of fixed exchange rates collapsed. A recent transnational telecommunications takeover created a firm whose market value exceeds the GDP of nearly half of all United Nations Members, though it ranks only as the world's fourth most valuable company. Today rushed General Assembly delegates can cross the Atlantic in less than four hours — and, if they so wish, conduct affairs of state on the Internet or telephone all the way.

21. This is the world of globalization — a new context for and a new connectivity among economic actors and activities throughout the world. Globalization has been made possible by the progressive dismantling of barriers to trade and capital mobility, together with fundamental technological advances and steadily declining costs of transportation, communication and computing. Its integrative logic seems inexorable, its momentum irresistible. The benefits of globalization are plain to see: faster economic growth, higher living standards, accelerated innovation and diffusion of technology and management skills, new economic opportunities for individuals and countries alike.

22. Why, then, has globalization begun to generate a backlash, of which the events surrounding last November's World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle were but the most recent and highly visible manifestation?

23. Few people, groups or governments oppose globalization as such. They protest against its disparities. First, the benefits and opportunities of globalization remain highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within them. Second, in recent decades an imbalance has emerged between successful efforts to craft strong and well-enforced rules facilitating the expansion of global markets, while support for equally valid social objectives, be they labour standards, the environment, human rights or poverty reduction, has lagged behind.

24. More broadly, for many people globalization has come to mean greater vulnerability to unfamiliar and unpredictable forces that can bring on economic instability and social dislocation, sometimes at lightning speed. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 was such a force — the fifth serious international monetary and financial crisis in just two decades. There is mounting anxiety that the integrity of cultures and the sovereignty of states may be at stake. Even in the most powerful countries, people wonder who is in charge, worry for their jobs and fear that their voices are drowned out in globalization's sweep.

25. Underlying these diverse expressions of concern is a single, powerful message: globalization must mean more than creating bigger markets. The economic sphere cannot be separated from the more complex fabric of social and political life, and sent shooting off on its own trajectory. To survive and thrive, a global economy must have a more solid foundation in shared

values and institutional practices — it must advance broader, and more inclusive, social purposes.

## A. The challenge in 1945

26. This view was firmly embraced by the world's leaders who gathered in the waning days of the Second World War to rebuild a viable international order. They knew fully how an earlier era of economic globalization, in some respects as economically interdependent as ours, eroded steadily before collapsing completely under the shock of 1914. That global era rested on a political structure of imperialism, denying subject peoples and territories the right of self-rule.

27. Moreover, the major powers lacked adequate means for international political adjustment and peaceful change. To stabilize the European balance of power, for example, those powers resorted to carving up the African continent. In the economic sphere, the best they could do to achieve international financial stability was to hold levels of domestic economic activity hostage to shifts in their external balance of payments — contracting when in deficit, expanding when in surplus. This practice became untenable once the franchise was extended to ordinary people and governments began to respond gradually — and at first grudgingly — to people's needs for steady jobs and stable prices.

28. From the 20 years' crisis between the wars, however, the architects of the post-1945 world learned how utterly destructive it was for countries to turn their backs altogether on economic interdependence. Unrestrained economic nationalism and "beggar-my-neighbour" policies took root almost everywhere in the 1930s, spilling over into political revanchism, totalitarianism and militarism in some countries, isolationism in others. The League of Nations was critically wounded from the start, and in the face of those forces it stood no chance.

29. Our predecessors, therefore, wisely chose a course of openness and cooperation. They established the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (later subsumed into the World Trade Organization) and a host of other organizations whose job it was to make the overall system work. Some supported decolonization, though the struggle for independence, which the United Nations was proud to promote, took too many years and cost too many lives. In the industrialized countries, domestic support for open markets was secured by constructing social safety nets and providing adjustment assistance to adversely affected groups and industries. We benefit from that legacy still.

30. Here, however, is the crux of our problem today: while the post-war multilateral system made it possible for the new globalization to emerge and flourish, globalization, in turn, has progressively rendered its designs antiquated. Simply put, our post-war institutions were built for an inter-*national* world, but we now live in a *global* world. Responding effectively to this shift is the core institutional challenge for world leaders today. The Millennium Summit can help show the way.

## B. The challenge today

31. How far we have moved from a strictly international world is evidenced by the changed nature of threats to peace and security faced by the world's people today. The provisions of the Charter presupposed that external aggression, an attack by one state against another, would constitute the most serious threat; but in recent decades far more people have been killed in civil wars, ethnic cleansing and acts of genocide, fuelled by weapons widely available in the global arms bazaar. Technologies of mass destruction circulate in a netherworld of illicit markets, and terrorism casts shadows on stable rule. We have not yet adapted our institutions to this new reality.

32. Much the same is true in the economic realm. Here, the post-war institutional arrangements were premised on a world made up of separate national economies, engaged in external transactions, conducted at arms length. Globalization contradicts each of these expectations. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the trade regime is under such stress — it increasingly deals with traditionally "domestic" matters rather than border barriers. Nor are we surprised that calls for a new financial architecture are so insistent.

33. Globalization constrains the ability of industrialized countries to cushion the adverse domestic effects of further market opening. The developing countries had never enjoyed that privilege

to begin with. As a result, the public in both now feels exposed and insecure.

34. Globalization has also created new vulnerabilities to old threats. Criminal networks take advantage of the most advanced technologies to traffic around the world in drugs, arms, precious metals and stones — even people. Indeed, these elements of "uncivil society" are constructing global conglomerates of illicit activities.

35. Diseases have shaped history for millennia, spread by traders, invaders and natural carriers. But the most recent upsurge in the global transmission of pathogens, above all HIV/AIDS, has hit with a velocity and scope made possible only by open borders and unprecedented mobility.

36. Entirely new dimensions of globalization have emerged as well. While transborder pollution has been on the international agenda for decades, once the cumulative effects of industrialization were understood to affect global climate change, the world entered — literally, became enveloped by — a wholly new context in which conventional institutional remedies fare poorly.

37. The revolution in global communications has created new expectations that humanitarian suffering will be alleviated and fundamental rights vindicated. Neither governments nor international institutions have yet sorted out either the full implications of these expectations or how to meet them.

38. The communications revolution is being felt in other ways, too. The Internet is the fastest growing instrument of communication in the history of civilization, and it may be the most rapidly disseminating tool of any kind ever. The convergence of information technology, the Internet and e-commerce may well become as transformative as the industrial revolution. They will continue to alter the world's economic landscape and reconfigure organizational structures. They will change the way many people work and live. They already make it possible to leapfrog existing barriers to development, as entrepreneurs from Bangalore to Guadalajara and São Paulo will testify, and the range of such opportunities can be vastly expanded.

39. Perhaps most important, these technologies enable people to be connected directly who otherwise might remain divided by distance, culture and economic stratification, potentially creating, thereby, a better understanding of who we, the peoples, are. But none of these possibilities exists for those without access to the technology, either because the necessary infrastructure or capital is lacking, or because regulatory environments stand in the way.

40. And so the challenge is clear: if we are to capture the promises of globalization while managing its adverse effects, we must learn to govern better, and we must learn how better to govern together. The Millennium Summit, therefore, takes place at a compelling moment, not merely in symbolic but also in practical terms.

## C. Governing better together

41. What do we mean by "governance" when applied to the international realm? What are some of its desirable attributes if our aim is to successfully manage the transition from an international to a global world?

42. In the minds of some, the term still conjures up images of world government, of centralized bureaucratic behemoths trampling on the rights of people and states. Nothing is less desirable. Weak states are one of the main impediments to effective governance today, at national and international levels alike. For the good of their own people and for the sake of our common aims, we must help to strengthen the capacity of those states to govern, not undermine them further. Moreover, the very notion of centralizing hierarchies is itself an anachronism in our fluid, highly dynamic and extensively networked world — an outmoded remnant of nineteenth century mindsets.

43. By the same token, states need to develop a deeper awareness of their dual role in our global world. In addition to the separate responsibilities each state bears towards its own society, states are, collectively, the custodians of our common life on this planet — a life the citizens of *all* countries share. Notwithstanding the institutional turmoil that is often associated with globalization, there exists no other entity that competes with or can substitute for the state. Successfully managing globalization, therefore, requires — first and foremost — that states act in a manner consistent with their dual role.

44. This implies, in turn, that decision-making structures through which governance is exercised internationally must reflect the broad realities of our times. The United Nations Security Council is an

obvious case in point. Based on the distribution of power and alignments in 1945, the composition of the Council today does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world. The same holds in some major economic forums: all countries are consumers of globalization's effects; all must have a greater say in the process itself.

45. The unique role of the United Nations in the new global era derives from our universal membership and scope, and from the shared values embodied in our Charter. It is our job to ensure that globalization provides benefits, not just for some, but for all; that peace and security hold, not only for a few, but for the many; that opportunities exist, not merely for the privileged, but for every human being everywhere. More than ever, the United Nations is needed to broker differences among states in power, culture, size and interest, serving as the place where the cause of common humanity is articulated and advanced. More than ever, a robust international legal order, together with the principles and practices of multilateralism, is needed to define the ground rules of an emerging global civilization within which there will be room for the world's rich diversity to express itself fully.

46. Better governance means greater participation, coupled with accountability. Therefore, the international public domain — including the United Nations — must be opened up further to the participation of the many actors whose contributions are essential to managing the path of globalization. Depending on the issues at hand, this may include civil society organizations, the private sector, parliamentarians, local authorities, scientific associations, educational institutions and many others.

47. Global companies occupy a critical place in this new constellation. They, more than anyone, have created the single economic space in which we live; their decisions have implications for the economic prospects of people and even nations around the world. Their rights to operate globally have been greatly expanded by international agreements and national policies, but those rights must be accompanied by greater responsibilities — by the concept and practice of global corporate citizenship. The marks of good citizenship may vary depending upon circumstances, but they will exhibit one common feature: the willingness by firms, wherever possible and appropriate, to pursue "good practices" as defined by the broader community, rather than taking advantage of the weaker regulatory systems or unequal bargaining positions of host countries.

48. The more integrated global context also demands a new degree of policy coherence, while important gaps must be filled. The international financial architecture needs strengthening, as does the multilateral trade regime. Greater consistency must be achieved among macroeconomic, trade, aid, financial and environmental policies, so that all support our common aim of expanding the benefits of globalization. Conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building, humanitarian assistance and development policies need to become more effectively integrated. In short, it is exceedingly difficult to successfully navigate the transition to a more global world with incomplete and incompatible policy fragments.

49. Formal institutional arrangements may often lack the scope, speed and informational capacity to keep up with the rapidly changing global agenda. Mobilizing the skills and other resources of diverse global actors, therefore, may increasingly involve forming loose and temporary global policy networks that cut across national, institutional and disciplinary lines. The United Nations is well situated to nurture such informal "coalitions for change" across our various areas of responsibility. Many of the networks can be virtual, overcoming, thereby, the usual constraints imposed by distance and time. The essential role that formal governance structures must continue to play is normative: defining objectives, setting standards and monitoring compliance.

50. For the United Nations, success in meeting the challenges of globalization ultimately comes down to meeting the needs of peoples. It is in their name that the Charter was written; realizing their aspirations remains our vision for the twenty-first century.

## D. The peoples' concerns

51. But who are *we*, the peoples? And what are our common concerns?

52. Let us imagine, for a moment, that the world really is a "global village" — taking seriously the metaphor that is often invoked to depict global interdependence. Say this village has 1,000 individuals, with all the characteristics of today's human race distributed in exactly the same proportions. What

would it look like? What would we see as its main challenges?

53. Some 150 of the inhabitants live in an affluent area of the village, about 780 in poorer districts. Another 70 or so live in a neighbourhood that is in transition. The average income per person is $6,000 a year, and there are more middle income families than in the past. But just 200 people dispose of 86 per cent of all the wealth, while nearly half of the villagers are eking out an existence on less than $2 per day.

54. Men outnumber women by a small margin, but women make up a majority of those who live in poverty. Adult literacy has been increasing. Still, some 220 villagers — two thirds of them women — are illiterate. Of the 390 inhabitants under 20 years of age, three fourths live in the poorer districts, and many are looking desperately for jobs that do not exist. Fewer than 60 people own a computer and only 24 have access to the Internet. More than half have never made or received a telephone call.

55. Life expectancy in the affluent district is nearly 78 years, in the poorer areas 64 years — and in the very poorest neighbourhoods a mere 52 years. Each marks an improvement over previous generations, but why do the poorest lag so far behind? Because in their neighbourhoods there is a far higher incidence of infectious diseases and malnutrition, combined with an acute lack of access to safe water, sanitation, health care, adequate housing, education and work.

56. There is no predictable way to keep the peace in this village. Some districts are relatively safe while others are wracked by organized violence. The village has suffered a growing number of weather-related natural disasters in recent years, including unexpected and severe storms, as well as sudden swings from floods to droughts, while the average temperature is perceptibly warmer. More and more evidence suggests that there is a connection between these two trends, and that warming is related to the kind of fuel, and the quantities of it, that the people and businesses are using. Carbon emissions, the major cause of warming, have quadrupled in the last 50 years. The village's water table is falling precipitously, and the livelihood of one sixth of the inhabitants is threatened by soil degradation in the surrounding countryside.

57. Who among us would not wonder how long a village in this state can survive without taking steps to ensure that all its inhabitants can live free from hunger and safe from violence, drinking clean water, breathing clean air, and knowing that their children will have real chances in life?

58. That is the question we have to face in our real world of 6 billion inhabitants. Indeed, questions like it were raised by the civil society participants at hearings held by the United Nations regional commissions in preparation for the Millennium Assembly — in Addis Ababa, Beirut, Geneva, Tokyo and Santiago.

59. Similar sentiments were expressed last autumn in the largest survey of public opinion ever conducted — of 57,000 adults in 60 countries, spread across all six continents (see box 1).

60. Strikingly, the centrality of human rights to peoples' expectations about the future role of the United Nations was stressed both at the hearings and in the survey. The current level of performance, especially of governments, was judged to be unsatisfactory.

61. The respondents in the Millennium Survey expressed equally strong views about the environment. Fully two thirds of them, worldwide, said their governments had not done enough to protect the environment. In only 5 countries out of 60 was the majority satisfied with the government's efforts in this respect; people in developing countries were among the most critical.

62. The hearings and the survey alike gave the United Nations a mixed overall assessment. In the sampling of public opinion, governments received even lower ratings than the United Nations. In most countries a majority said their elections were free and fair, but as many as two thirds of all respondents felt that their country, nevertheless, was not governed by the will of the people. Even in the world's oldest democracies many citizens expressed deep dissatisfaction.

63. Let there be no mistake. We have many success stories to tell and positive trends to report — and I shall do both throughout this report. The United Nations global conferences in the 1990s, for example, laid a solid foundation of goals and action plans — in the areas of environment and development, human rights, women, children, social development, population, human settlements and food security. At the national level, economic restructuring and political reforms are more widespread today than ever.

64. The world's people are nevertheless telling us that our past achievements are not enough, given the

scale of the challenges we face. We must do more, and we must do it better.

65. The challenges I highlight below are not exhaustive. I have focused on strategic priority areas where, in my view, we can and must make a real difference to help people lead better lives. The challenges are clustered into three broad categories. Two are founding aims of the United Nations whose achievement eludes us still: freedom from want, and freedom from fear. No one dreamed, when the Charter was written, that the third — leaving to successor generations an environmentally sustainable future — would emerge as one of the most daunting challenges of all.

Box 1

**Voices of the people: the world's largest ever public opinion poll survey**

In 1999, Gallup International sponsored and conducted a Millennium Survey of 57,000 adults in 60 countries.

**What matters most in life**

- People everywhere valued good health and a happy family life more highly than anything else. Where economic performance was poor, they also stressed jobs.
- Where there was conflict, people expressed a strong desire to live without it. Where corruption was endemic, people condemned it.

**Human rights**

- Respondents showed widespread dissatisfaction with the level of respect for human rights.
- In one region fewer than one in 10 citizens believed that human rights were being fully respected, while one third believed they were not observed at all.
- Discrimination by race and gender were commonly expressed concerns.

**Environment**

- Two thirds of all the respondents said their government had done too little to redress environmental problems in their country.
- Respondents in the developing countries were among the most critical of their government's actions in this respect.

**The United Nations**

- The survey showed that most people around the globe consider the protection of human rights to be the most important task for the United Nations. The younger the respondents, the greater the importance assigned to this goal.
- United Nations peacekeeping and the provision of humanitarian assistance were also stressed.
- Globally, less than half of those interviewed judged the performance of the United Nations to be satisfactory, although a majority of the young were favourably inclined.

**Democracy**

- In most countries the majority said their elections were free and fair.
- Despite this, two thirds of all respondents considered that their country was not governed by the will of the people. This opinion held even in some of the oldest democracies in the world.

## III. Freedom from want

66. In the past half-century the world has made unprecedented economic gains. Countries that a mere generation ago were struggling with underdevelopment are now vibrant centres of global economic activity and domestic well-being. In just two decades, 15 countries, whose combined populations exceed 1.6 billion, have halved the proportion of their citizens living in extreme poverty. Asia has made an astounding recovery from the financial crisis of 1997-1998, demonstrating the staying power of its economies — though Asia's poor have not yet regained lost ground.

67. Chief among the human development success stories since the 1960s are the increase in life expectancy in developing countries, from 46 to 64 years; the halving of infant mortality rates; an increase of more than 80 per cent in the proportion of children enrolled in primary school; and the doubling of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

68. While more of us enjoy better standards of living than ever before, many others remain desperately poor. Nearly half the world's population still has to make do on less than $2 per day. Approximately 1.2 billion people —500 million in South Asia and 300 million in Africa — struggle on less than $1 (see fig.1; for other measures of poverty, see fig. 2). People living in Africa south of the Sahara are almost as poor today as they were 20 years ago. With that kind of deprivation comes pain, powerlessness, despair and lack of fundamental freedom — all of which, in turn, perpetuate poverty. Of a total world labour force of some 3 billion, 140 million workers are out of work altogether, and a quarter to a third are underemployed.

69. The persistence of income inequality over the past decade is also troubling. Globally, the 1 billion people living in developed countries earn 60 per cent of the world's income, while the 3.5 billion people in low-income countries earn less than 20 per cent. Many countries have experienced growing internal inequality, including some of those in transition from communism. In the developing world, income gaps are most pronounced in Latin America, followed closely by sub-Saharan Africa.

70. Extreme poverty is an affront to our common humanity. It also makes many other problems worse. For example, poor countries — especially those with significant inequality between ethnic and religious communities — are far more likely to be embroiled in conflicts than rich ones. Most of these conflicts are internal, but they almost invariably create problems for neighbours or generate a need for humanitarian assistance.

71. Moreover, poor countries often lack the capacity and resources to implement environmentally sound policies. This undermines the sustainability of their people's meagre existence, and compounds the effects of their poverty.

72. Unless we redouble and concert our efforts, poverty and inequality may get worse still. World population recently reached 6 billion. It took only 12 years to add the last billion, the shortest such span in history. By 2025, we can expect a further 2 billion — almost all in developing countries, and most of them in the poorest (see fig. 3). We must act now.

73. **I call on the international community at the highest level — the Heads of State and Government convened at the Millennium Summit — to adopt the target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, and so lifting more than 1 billion people out of it, by 2015. I further urge that no effort be spared to reach this target by that date in every region, and in every country.**

74. History will judge political leaders in the developing countries by what they did to eradicate the extreme poverty of their people — by whether they enabled their people to board the train of a transforming global economy, and made sure that everyone had at least standing room, if not a comfortable seat. By the same token, history will judge the rest of us by what we did to help the world's poor board that train in good order.

75. There is a growing consensus on what must be done for us to reach this paramount goal — and it *can* be reached. I wish to highlight a number of specific areas for particular attention by the Summit.

### A. Achieving sustained growth

76. Our only hope of significantly reducing poverty is to achieve sustained and broad-based income growth. South Asia, and even more so sub-Saharan Africa, will have to make significant gains.

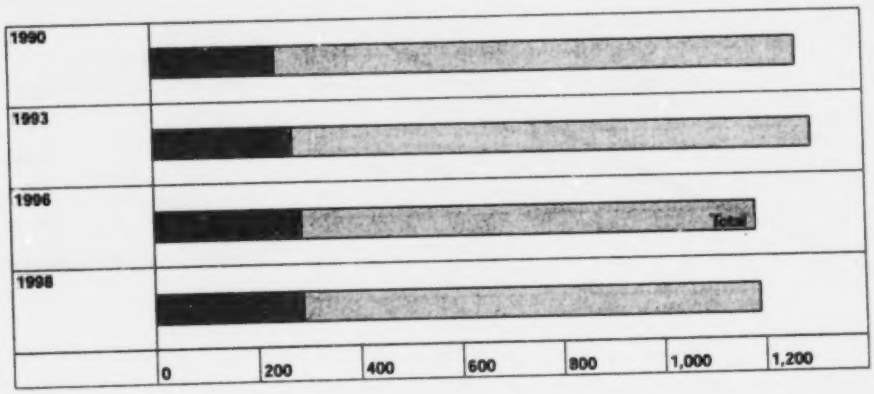



**Figure 1**
**Population living on less than $1 per day, 1990-1998**
(Millions)

*Note*: Data for 1998 are estimated.
*Source*: World Bank, *World Development Indicators, 1999*.

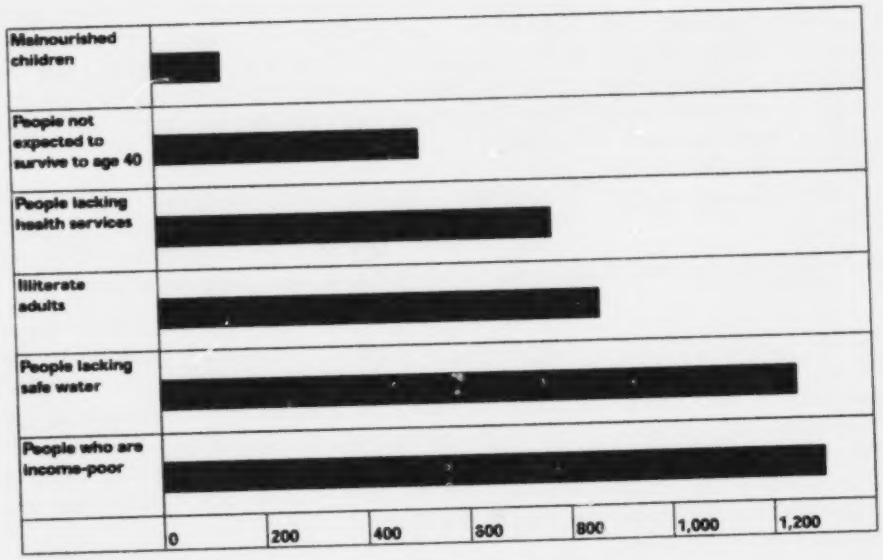



**Figure 2**
**Measures of poverty**
(Millions)

*Source*: United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report, 1997*.

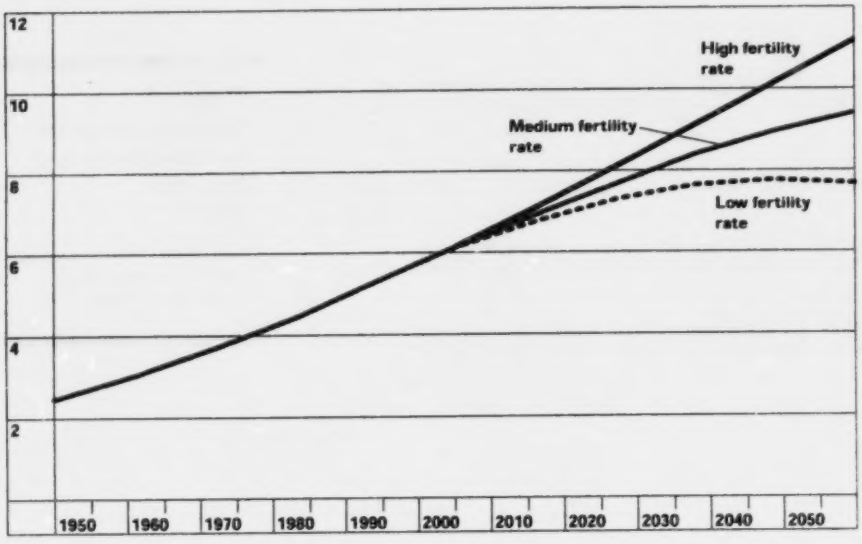



**Figure 3**
**World population projections, 1950-2050**
(Billions)

*Source*: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Critical Trends, Global Change and Sustainable Development*, 1997.

77. The latest poverty figures illustrate the challenge. They show a decrease in the overall number of people living on $1 a day. A closer look reveals that this is due almost entirely to progress in East Asia, notably China, where poverty reduction is closely associated with strong rates of growth. Indeed, recent studies show an almost perfect correlation between growth and poverty reduction in poor countries — a 1 per cent increase in GDP brings a corresponding increase in the incomes of the poorest 20 per cent of the population. Only in the societies with the greatest inequalities does growth fail to benefit the poor.

78. So what are some of the critical ingredients of success?

79. Expanding access to the opportunities of globalization is one. Those countries that have achieved higher growth are those that have successfully integrated into the global economy and attracted foreign investment. Over the past 25 years, Asia has grown at an annual rate of 7 per cent and Latin America at 5 per cent. The countries that have been largely left out of globalization have fared the worst. That includes substantial parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

80. Some people fear that globalization makes inequality worse. The relationship between the two is complex. With the exception of the economies in transition, recent increases in income gaps are largely the result of technological changes that favour higher skilled workers over less skilled ones. As the economic benefits of education and skills increase, so does income inequality between the people who have them and those who do not. This is true both within and among countries. Globalization may exacerbate these differences, but it does not cause them. Increased global competition may also restrain income gains in relatively higher wage countries, though to date this effect has been felt mainly in the industrialized countries.

81. Another major source of income inequality within countries is gender discrimination in wages, property rights and access to education. Here globalization, on the whole, may be having some positive effects.

82. In the developing countries, the labour force engaged in global production typically includes a large proportion of women — whether in textiles, electronics, data processing or chip manufacturing. In many cases, these women work in conditions and for wages that are appalling, and which we must strive to improve. But the fact of their employment also has important benefits.

83. These new employment opportunities enable women to expand the range of critical choices open to them. They can delay marriage, for example, as a result of which fertility rates often decline. They and their children often gain access to more and better nutrition, health care and education. As the survival rates of their children increase, fertility rates will decline further. The increase in female employment and earnings may

also lead to changes in the perceived "social value" of a female child, which means that parents and society at large may become more willing to give girls greater access to education, health care and nutrition.

84. It is now widely accepted that economic success depends in considerable measure on the quality of governance a country enjoys. Good governance comprises the rule of law, effective State institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives. While there may be debates about the most appropriate forms they should take, there can be no disputing the importance of these principles.

85. A fair and transparent public expenditure and taxation system is another key ingredient. Revenues must be used wisely to help the poor, and to make sound investments in physical and social infrastructure for all. Excessive regulation, by contrast, impedes economic performance and slows growth.

86. Certain practices clearly do not constitute good governance by any definition. If a succession of military dictators in a resource-rich country in a poor part of the world siphon off as much as $27 billion of the public's money, economic performance and the poor are likely to suffer. Those responsible for such abuses, and the international banks that eagerly transfer their funds to safe havens, must be held accountable.

87. Other forms of institutionalized corruption are far less extreme but may, nevertheless, seriously distort economic incentives, limit economic growth and result in low levels of support for the poor.

88. Nothing is more inimical to pro-growth, anti-poverty objectives than armed conflict. It must pain us all beyond description to see a war between two of Africa's poorest countries drag on into yet a third year, having already taken an estimated 55,000 lives, and with 8 million people in one of the countries threatened by famine. Internal conflicts in other parts of Africa have lasted even longer, and have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of many more millions of Africans.

89. Sustained and broad-based growth also requires investments in health and education, as well as other social policies. The United Nations conferences in the 1990s spelled these out in considerable detail; I shall recommend both a health and an education initiative.

90. Better-educated and healthier people are empowered to make better choices and lead fuller lives, which also makes them more productive and their economies more competitive. Similarly, all the evidence indicates that extending equal opportunities to women and girls has multiplier effects for entire families and even communities. As a supplement to universal social programmes, school lunches and other targeted initiatives for the poor have an economic as well as a social purpose.

91. Finally, appropriate levels and types of support from the global community — public and private — are needed for development targets to be reached. I shall address this dimension of the challenge separately.

92. In short, experience confirms some fundamental truths: growth is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for reducing poverty and income inequality. The surest route to growth is through successfully engaging in the global economy. But that must be combined with effective social policies: advances in education for all, health for all and gender equality. Success rests on a strong foundation in governance. And it requires external support.

## B. Generating opportunities for the young

93. More than 1 billion people today are between the ages of 15 and 24; in fact, nearly 40 per cent of the world's population is below the age of 20. Many of these young people already are, or are about to start, having children of their own. Most of the resulting youth bulge — nearly 98 per cent — will occur in the developing world.

94. Demography is not destiny, but this is a formidable challenge — not so much because of the sheer number of people as because of the context of poverty and deprivation in which they will have to live unless we take decisive action now. If I had one wish for the new millennium, it would be that we treat this challenge as an opportunity for all, not a lottery in which most of us will lose.

95. Young people are a source of creativity, energy and initiative, of dynamism and social renewal. They learn quickly and adapt readily. Given the chance to go to school and find work, they will contribute hugely to economic development and social progress.

96. Were we to fail to give them these opportunities, at best we would be complicit in an unforgivable waste of human potential. At worst, we would be contributing to all the evils of youth without hope: loss of morale, and lives that are socially unproductive and potentially destructive — of the individuals themselves, their communities and even fragile democracies.

### Education

97. Education is the key to the new global economy, from primary school on up to life-long learning. It is central to development, social progress and human freedom.

98. Educational levels in developing countries have climbed dramatically in the past half-century. Indeed, East Asia's rapid reduction of poverty has had a great deal to do with its investments in education. But we still have a long way to go. While a majority of the world's children are attending school, more than 130 million primary-school-age children in developing countries are not — of whom more than half live in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

99. Moreover, to enable families living in poverty to survive, a quarter of a billion children aged 14 and under, both in and out of school, now work, often in hazardous or unhealthy conditions. They toil in urban sweatshops; on farms or as domestic servants; selling gum or cleaning shoes in urban streets; clambering down dangerous mine shafts; and — in distressing numbers — bonded or sold into sexual services. Having approved the International Labour Organization convention on the worst forms of child labour, Member States must now implement it fully.

100. Providing primary education for the 130 million children in developing countries who do not now enjoy it would add an estimated $7 billion a year to educational costs, over a 10-year period. More than buildings are required, however. Schools must be accessible, have qualified teachers and offer such amenities as textbooks and supplies for the poor.

101. About 60 per cent of children not in school are girls. Female enrolment in rural areas remains shockingly low. Short-changing girls is not only a matter of gender discrimination; it is bad economics and bad social policy. Experience has shown, over and over again, that investments in girls' education translate directly and quickly into better nutrition for the whole family, better health care, declining fertility, poverty reduction and better overall economic performance. Indeed, world leaders, at United Nations conferences throughout the 1990s, have acknowledged that poverty cannot be overcome without specific, immediate and sustained attention to girls' education.

102. Yet the gap between numbers of boys and girls in school remains significant in 47 countries even at the primary level. In some instances, efforts to increase overall enrolments have widened it.

103. Individual families in poverty face stark choices. Schooling is often expensive, girls are a traditional source of free household labour and parents are not confident that an educated daughter will benefit the family as much as an educated son. To overcome this difference between household priorities and those of society at large, families need support from their local communities and governments, backed by the wider world. Generating employment opportunities for women would have a similar effect.

104. Universal access to primary and secondary school education is vital, and can only be achieved by closing the education gender gap. UNICEF, with other United Nations partners, has developed an initiative that encompasses both primary and secondary levels. Its success depends both on national strategies and plans and on international financial support. I ask all governments to work with us to make it succeed. And I propose that we go a step further:

105. **I urge the Millennium Summit to endorse the objectives of demonstrably narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and of ensuring that, by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary education.**

### Employment

106. Education is the first step. Creating employment opportunities is the next.

107. The world faces a major challenge of youth unemployment — and it is liable to get even worse with the coming youth bulge. According to International Labour Organization estimates, 60 million young people are searching for work but cannot find any; about 80 per cent of them are in developing countries and economies in transition. Those in the 15 to 24 age cohort are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as adults; in some developing countries the ratio is higher. Young workers are also more likely

than older ones to be last hired, first fired; and they are less likely to be protected by legislation.

108. Joblessness among the young can be devastating, and governments have tried, in a number of ways, to deal with it. But policies targeted at young people, including preferential hiring, have proved largely unsuccessful for the simple reason that they are economically unsustainable.

109. The problem is one of inadequate aggregate demand. Low-growth economies cannot generate sufficient employment opportunities to hire their own young people. This failure, in turn, further depresses growth and perpetuates poverty. No one has yet discovered any easy or obvious solutions to this self-perpetuating cycle.

110. **Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge.**

111. I will ask this policy network to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation.

## C. Promoting health and combating HIV/AIDS

112. In recent decades, innovations in medicine, progress in basic health care and enabling social policies have brought dramatic increases in life expectancy and sharp declines in infant mortality. Better health, in turn, stimulates economic growth while reducing poverty and income inequality. In fact, investments in health care are particularly beneficial to the poor, who are largely dependent for their livelihoods on their own labour.

113. Not all regions have achieved the same level of progress. East Asia has done best, sub-Saharan Africa the least well. Lack of access to basic health care is one of the main reasons poor people stay poor. In most low-income countries, health spending is often less than $10 per person per year. In Africa, the high burden of disease not only requires families to stretch their meagre resources but also locks them into a high-fertility, high-mortality poverty trap.

114. In some of the transition economies, a precipitous fall in life expectancy has occurred in recent years, reflecting reduced public spending on health care and a more general erosion of social services.

115. Although more than $56 billion a year is spent globally on health research, less than 10 per cent is aimed at the health problems affecting 90 per cent of the world's population. Pneumonia, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and malaria — all of great concern to developing countries — receive less than 1 per cent of global health research budgets.

116. The results are shattering. Malaria alone takes two lives every minute of every day — mainly children under 5 and pregnant women. The Roll Back Malaria campaign, led by the World Health Organization, deserves full support as it seeks to control and prevent this deadly disease.

117. More generally, wider access to essential drugs, vaccines and such simple and cost-effective interventions as insecticide-treated bed nets could sharply reduce high mortality and disability rates among poor people around the world.

118. It is beyond the scope of this report to explore all of these challenges. I wish here to focus on a specific health crisis that threatens to reverse a generation of accomplishments in human development, and which is rapidly becoming a social crisis on a global scale: the spread of HIV/AIDS.

119. Some 50 million people have been infected with HIV since the early 1970s; 16 million have died. In 1999 alone, 5.6 million people became infected with HIV, half of them under 25 years old. It is a disease that attacks the young disproportionately, its worst effects are concentrated in poor countries and it has a hideous potential to expand.

120. Of nearly 36 million people now living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, more than 23 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, a teacher dies of AIDS every school day. The average child born in Botswana today has a life expectancy of 41 years, when without AIDS it would have been 70 years. In the worst hit cities of southern Africa, 40 per cent of pregnant women are HIV-positive.

121. In that same region, more than one child in every 10 has already lost its mother to AIDS. By 2010, it is estimated that there will be 40 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, largely because of HIV/AIDS. Those children are far less likely to continue schooling or be immunized than their peers, and much more likely to suffer serious malnutrition. Tragically, it is no longer unusual to see orphans under the age of 15 heading households.

122. Government projections in Zimbabwe indicate that HIV/AIDS will consume 60 per cent of the nation's health budget by 2005, and even that will be wholly inadequate. AIDS is decimating the ranks of the skilled and educated during their prime years, with what are bound to be tragic implications for every affected country and for the entire region.

123. And the epidemic is spreading far beyond Africa. In Asia, new HIV infections increased by 70 per cent between 1996 and 1998. India is now estimated to have more people living with HIV than any other country in the world. In short, the crisis has become global.

124. Building on the agreement reached by the General Assembly at its special session on population and development, held in 1999, I propose a strategy to contain and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, focused on young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24, and to provide better care for those living with the illness.

125. The active support of governments is critical. Large-scale prevention programmes have had some success in several developing countries, including Senegal, Thailand and Uganda. Such efforts, however, are rare, and typically underfunded. In too many countries an official conspiracy of silence about AIDS has denied people information that could have saved their lives. We must empower young people to protect themselves through information and a supportive social environment that reduces their vulnerability to infection.

126. As a next step, ready access to essential services and preventive technologies must be provided, including male and female condoms. Preventing mother-to-child transmission is especially important. It could avert half a million new infections in babies every year. There is evidence that a drug called nevaripine is both effective and relatively inexpensive. A $4 single dose — along with the cost of testing and voluntary counselling — may be nearly as effective as more complicated and far more expensive regimens. If so, it should be made universally available.

127. The world's leaders must act to protect their young people and children from avoidable premature illness and mortality due to HIV. UNAIDS will work with governments and other partners to develop and implement national plans of action. Indeed, I would urge that every seriously affected country have a national plan of action in place within one year of the Summit. In addition:

128. **I recommend that the Millennium Summit adopt as an explicit goal the reduction of HIV infection rates in persons 15 to 24 years of age — by 25 per cent within the most affected countries before the year 2005 and by 25 per cent globally before 2010.**

129. **To that end, I recommend further that governments set explicit prevention targets: by 2005 at least 90 per cent, and by 2010 at least 95 per cent, of young men and women must have access to the information, education and services they need to protect themselves against HIV infection.**

130. Finally, the world desperately needs a vaccine against HIV. Of the $2 billion spent on research for the treatment of AIDS to date, only $250 million has been spent on creating vaccines, few of which are potentially useful for poor countries, where about 95 per cent of HIV infections occur.

131. **Therefore, I challenge the developed countries to work with their pharmaceutical industries and other partners to develop an effective and affordable vaccine against HIV.**

132. The scientific challenges and financial needs are daunting, but I believe that innovative public-private partnerships, supported by public incentive systems, can stimulate the increased investments so desperately needed. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization serves as a model of what such partnerships can achieve (see box 2).

133. Finally, we must also ensure that systems of care and support for the 36 million people who live with HIV/AIDS are improved. Even relatively inexpensive treatments and better care can help in the fight against the symptoms of AIDS, and can make it possible for people with AIDS to live longer, more productive and more dignified lives. Moreover, governments, the pharmaceutical industry and international institutions working together must make HIV-related drugs more widely accessible to developing countries.

Box 2
**Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization**

At the start of the new millennium a quarter of the world's children, most of them in poor countries, remain unprotected against the six core diseases: polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, tetanus and tuberculosis. Those children are 10 times more likely to die from these diseases than children protected by vaccines.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) was formed in 1999 with the mission of ensuring that all the world's children are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The Alliance is a creative coalition of national governments, development banks, business leaders, philanthropic foundations, the World Health Organization, the World Bank group and UNICEF. Its strategic objectives include:

- Improving access to sustainable immunization services;
- Accelerating the research and development of new vaccines for diseases that are especially prevalent in developing countries, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhoea;
- Expanding the use of all existing cost-effective vaccines;
- Making immunization a centrepiece in the design and assessment of international development efforts.

In January 2000, GAVI launched the Global Fund for Children's Vaccines at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The Fund, assisted by a $750 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will provide resources to expand the reach of existing vaccines and to strengthen the infrastructures necessary to deliver vaccines in the poorest countries. The Fund will also support research for developing new vaccines.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization exemplifies the value of public-private sector cooperation in finding global solutions to global problems.

## D. Upgrading the slums

**134. During the next generation, the global urban population will double, from 2.5 billion to 5 billion people. Almost all of the increase will be in developing countries. Cities are often described as cradles of civilization, and sources of cultural and economic renaissance but, for the roughly one third of the developing world's urban population that lives in extreme poverty, they are anything but that. Most of these urban poor have no option but to find housing in squalid and unsafe squatter settlements or slums. And** even though the population of cities, like countries, has on average become older, slum dwellers are getting younger.

135. Slums go by various names — *favelas, kampungs, bidonvilles, tugurios, gecikondus* — but the meaning is everywhere the same: miserable living conditions. Slums lack basic municipal services, such as water, sanitation, waste collection and storm drainage. Typically, there are no schools or clinics within easy reach, no places for the community to meet and socialize, no safe areas for children to play. Slum dwellers live and work in conditions of pervasive

insecurity — exposed to disease, crime and environmental hazards.

136. Such slums and squatter settlements are only partially caused by inherent resource scarcities. Also to blame are poorly functioning markets for property and land, unresponsive financial systems, failed policies, corruption and a fundamental lack of political will. And yet these cities-within-cities are wellsprings of entrepreneurial energy that can be mobilized to provide welfare improvements for their inhabitants and for society at large.

137. The World Bank and the United Nations have joined forces to respond to this challenge, by building a global alliance of cities and their development partners. An ambitious "Cities without Slums" action plan was launched in December 1999, with President Nelson Mandela as its patron. It aims to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. (The key features of this plan are presented in the table.) It requires world leaders to commit themselves to, and the international development community to focus on, improving the living conditions of the urban poor.

138. **I strongly support the Cities without Slums initiative and ask all Member States to endorse it and to act on it.**

## E. Including Africa

139. Nowhere is a global commitment to poverty reduction needed more than in Africa south of the Sahara, because no region of the world endures greater human suffering. The latest estimates indicate that sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of people who live on less than $1 a day. Growth in per capita income averaged 1.5 per cent in the 1960s, 0.8 per cent in the 1970s, and minus 1.2 per cent in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the region grew more slowly than any other group of middle- or low-income countries.

140. Today, per capita income is just $500 a year. Private capital flows to Africa are a tiny fraction of global flows, and for some countries capital flight is several times their GDP. Total outstanding external debts often exceed the entire gross national product, and it is not unusual for debt servicing requirements to exceed 25 per cent of export earnings. Reversing these trends poses an enormous challenge to both domestic and international policy makers, and the difficulty of the task is multiplied manifold by the severity of Africa's AIDS crisis.

141. Extractive industries dominate the region's economy and resources are being depleted at an alarming rate. Infrastructure requirements are enormous, particularly in the areas of power generation and telecommunications. Electrical power consumption, per person, is the lowest in the world. Africa has 14 telephone lines per 1,000 people, and less than half of 1 per cent of all Africans have used the Internet. A mere 17 per cent of road surfaces is paved. And the list goes on.

142. Yet Mozambique topped the world's GDP growth last year — before its recent devastating floods. Higher commodity prices, of course, were a significant factor, but Mozambique, utterly impoverished and in the grip of an apparently intractable civil war only a few years ago, has taken great strides thanks to its own efforts. Botswana, ranked second on the list, and several other countries in the region have enjoyed good economic performance and good governance for some time. What, precisely, are the impediments elsewhere?

143. In economic terms, African productivity has suffered because economic regimes tend to be tightly controlled and inefficiently managed by the state. This results in high trade barriers, and poor delivery of public services. It also means that corruption is widespread. Firms in the private sector are unable to compete internationally because they lack access to appropriate technology and information.

144. The agricultural sector in Africa has yet to experience a Green Revolution. Unlike the rest of the world, yields of basic food commodities have not increased significantly. Variable rainfall, highly weathered soils, disease and pests have taken their toll. Agricultural technologies developed in other climatic and ecological zones have not transferred well into the region. Inputs like fertilizer are often controlled by state monopolies and are not available to farmers at competitive prices. Fertilizer prices in the early 1990s, for example, were estimated to be two to four times higher in Africa than in Asia. The poor infrastructure restricts the ability to move goods, so that transportation and shipping costs remain prohibitive.

145. Africa's agricultural sector thus remains unable to generate a steady and inexpensive source of food for urban populations. Indeed, much of sub-Sahara's food supply is imported. Its urban centres remain small by international standards, and they have not provided the human capital necessary to fuel industrial expansion.

**Cities without Slums Action Plan**

| *Actions* | *2000* | *2001* | *2006-2020* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • Mobilize global political and financial commitments to slum upgrading and gear up the capacity to support large-scale actions | • 20 citywide and/or nationwide programmes under way in five regions changing the lives of 5 million urban poor | • 50 nationwide programmes launched, with slum improvements — a central element of urban development strategies in most countries<br>• 100 million slum residents with basic services<br>• slum formation stopped |
| Support in grants | $4 million | $111 million | $180 million |
| Urban budget increment | $3.5 million | $35 million | $100 million |
| Upgrading investments | $200 million | $2,300 million | $47,500 million |

*Source*: Cities Alliance for Cities without Slums, World Bank, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), 1999.

146. **I challenge the foremost experts in the world to think through the barrier of low agricultural productivity in Africa. I implore the great philanthropic foundations — which have stimulated so much good and practical research on agriculture — to rise to this vital challenge.**

147. In many African countries there are political obstacles to economic progress as well. I addressed these issues in a report to the Security Council in April 1998. They boil down to a "winner-takes-all" attitude to political competition, the control of society's wealth and resources, and to the power of patronage and the prerogatives of office. It is coupled in too many instances with appalling violations of fundamental rights and a readiness to resort to force to resolve disputes or hold on to power.

148. Only Africans, I concluded in that report, can break out of these vicious cycles. I am gratified that so many have chosen to do so, and that rulers who had perpetrated crimes against their own people are increasingly being held accountable for them. Yet inexplicably, even today, relatively few African governments show the necessary commitment to poverty reduction in their national economic and social policies.

149. We do have the chance to turn things around. There are many positive developments in Africa, and the international community has demonstrated a growing interest in assisting those African countries still afflicted by turmoil and tragedy. We must not let up now.

## F. Building digital bridges

150. The world has entered the early phases of another technological revolution. We see it in the area of medicines and pharmaceuticals, and in biotechnology. These new frontiers raise both hopes and fears. Better health and greater food security are within our reach, but in seizing the opportunities biotechnology presents we must not neglect the inherent risks. In particular, we must ensure that free access is provided to the information compiled by researchers deciphering the genetic code. The genetic key to human life belongs to all humanity.

151. I wish to focus here on a technological shift that is already transforming social and economic life: the digital revolution. Fundamental changes are occurring in the communications and information industries, and at near-lightning speed (see fig. 4).

152. It took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million people, and 13 years for television. The same number of people adopted the Internet in just four years. There were 50 pages on the World Wide Web in 1993; today there are more than 50 million. A mere 143 million people logged on to the Internet in 1998; by 2001 the number of users will climb to 700 million. The market for e-commerce was $2.6 billion in 1996; it is expected to grow to $300 billion by 2002. And the Internet already has a far wider range of applications than any previous tool of communication ever invented.

153. At present, a yawning digital divide still exists in the world. There are more computers in the United States of America than in the rest of the world combined. There are as many telephones in Tokyo as in all of Africa.

154. This digital divide can — and will — be bridged. Already, the city of Bangalore in India has become a dynamic hub of innovation, boasting more than 300 high-tech companies. India's software exports alone will exceed $4 billion this year — about 9 per cent of India's total exports — and industry sources project that they will reach $50 billion by 2008 (see box 3.)

155. Costa Rica's economic growth surged to 8.3 per cent in 1999, the highest in Latin America, fuelled by exports from the microchip industry, which now accounts for 38 per cent of all exports. I could give many other examples of developing countries seizing the opportunity of this revolution. It holds great promise for economic growth and development, potentially for all countries.

156. To fully appreciate how the digital revolution can stimulate economic growth and development, we need to grasp several of its core features. First, it has created a brand new economic sector that simply did not exist before. As the countries at its forefront devote ever larger shares of their economies to this sector, a high-value space is opened up for others to occupy, and so on successively throughout the world economy. This, indeed, is how the so-called emerging economies first "emerged" when other sectors were vacated. Globalization facilitates such shifts.

157. Second, the capital that matters most in the digital revolution increasingly is intellectual capital. Hardware costs are declining. The shift from hardware to software as the cutting edge of the industry helps to overcome what has been a major impediment to development — the shortage of finance. It also improves the chances for poor countries to leapfrog some long and painful stages in the development process. Clearly, the requisite intellectual capital is not universally available, but it is far more widespread in the developing world and in the transition economies than is finance capital.

158. Third, the digital revolution, besides creating a new economic sector, is also a means to transform and enhance many other activities. Mauritius, for example, uses the Internet to position its textile industry globally. The UNCTAD Trade Point Programme allows participants to trade products on-line. The Government of Mali has established an intranet to provide more effective administrative services. And there are many other opportunities: for telemedicine and distance learning; for "virtual" banking coupled with microcredit; for checking weather forecasts before planting and crop prices before harvesting; for having the world's largest library at your fingertips; and so on. The information technology sector, in short, can transform many if not most other sectors of economic and social activity.

159. Finally, the core product in this sector — information — has unique attributes, not shared by others. The steel used to construct a building, or the boots worn by the workers constructing it, cannot be consumed by anyone else. Information is different. Not only is it available for multiple uses and users, it becomes more valuable the more it is used. The same is true of the networks that link up different sources of information. We in the policy-making world need to understand better how the economics of information differs from the economics of inherently scarce physical goods — and use it to advance our policy goals.

160. This is not to say that the transition will be easy for developing countries, especially the very poor. Lack of resources and skills is part of the problem, inadequate basic infrastructure another, illiteracy and language a third, and, of course, there are concerns about privacy and content. Technical solutions will become available for many of these problems, including wireless access, and even simple automatic translation programmes, enabling us to communicate and engage in e-commerce across language barriers.

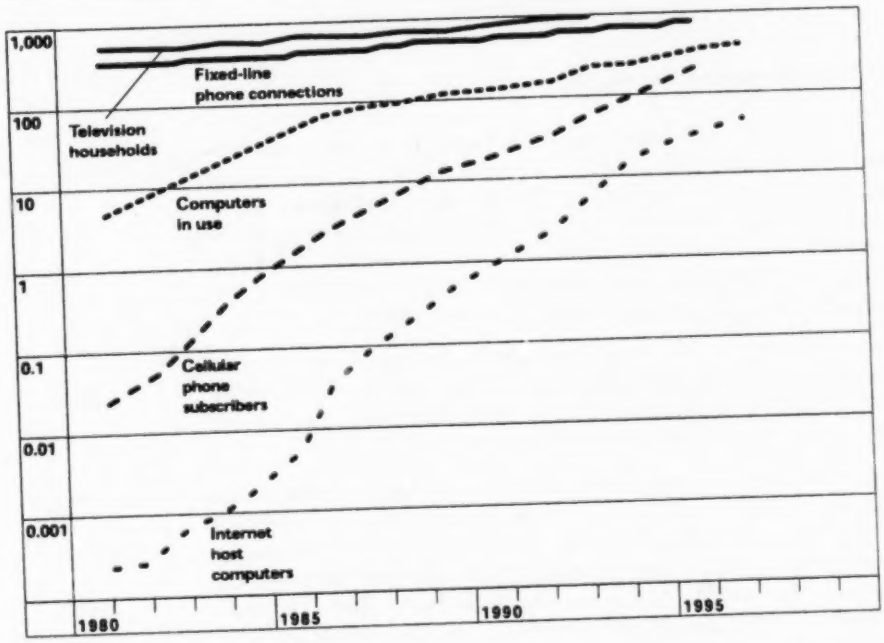



**Figure 4**
**Growth of information technologies**
(Millions)

*Source*: World Watch Institute, International Telecommunication Union, 2000

161. For the immediate future, the individual consumer model of using information technology that prevails in the industrialized countries will prove too expensive for many developing ones. But that constraint, too, can be overcome. Public telecentres have been established in places from Peru to Kazakhstan. In Egypt, for example, the United Nations Development Programme has helped to create Technology Access Community Centres to bring the Internet and fax service to poor and rural areas. With help from civil society organizations and the private sector, we can expand these pilot programmes to reach even the remotest corners of the globe.

162. There is however no easy fix for the institutional impediments in many developing countries, above all unsupportive regulatory environments and exorbitant charges imposed by national authorities.

163. **I encourage Member States to review their policies and arrangements in this area, to make sure that they are not denying their people the opportunities offered by the digital revolution.**

164. **As a concrete demonstration of how we can build bridges over digital divides, I am pleased to announce a new Health InterNetwork for developing countries.**

165. This network will establish and operate 10,000 on-line sites in hospitals, clinics and public health facilities throughout the developing world. It aims to provide access to relevant up-to-date health and medical information, tailored for specific countries or groups of countries. The equipment and Internet access, wireless where necessary, will be provided by a consortium led by the *Web*MD Foundation, in cooperation with other foundation and corporate partners. Training and capacity-building in developing countries is an integral part of the project. The World Health Organization is leading the United Nations side in developing this initiative with external partners, including the United Nations Foundation.

166. **I am also announcing a second digital bridges initiative: a United Nations Information Technology Service, which I propose to call UNITeS.**

167. This will be a consortium of high-tech volunteer corps, including Net Corps Canada and Net Corps America, which United Nations Volunteers will help to coordinate. UNITeS will train groups in developing countries in the uses and opportunities of information technology, and stimulate the creation of additional digital corps in the North and South. We are currently exploring external sources of funding to support UNITeS.

Box 3
**India and the Information Revolution**

No developing country has benefited more from the digital revolution than India, whose software industry is expected to increase about eightfold, to $85 billion, by 2008. The industry has generated a significant amount of employment and wealth, creating a new cadre of high-technology entrepreneurs. One Indian company, Infosys Technologies, has seen a tenfold increase in its value since it was listed on the United States Nasdaq stock exchange in March 1999.

The software revolution in India has been accelerated by foreign investment and assisted by economic liberalization and the creation of government-supported software technology parks. India also has a great number of globally mobile software professionals.

Indian companies have become world leaders in designing portals and web-based applications, and they have successfully sidestepped bureaucratic delays and outdated infrastructure by building their own telecommunications systems and beaming their software products by satellite around the world. Access to the Internet in India is also increasing rapidly and it is estimated that about 6 million people in India will be using the Internet by 2001, aided by the deregulation of the telecommunications and information technology sectors.

Yet India, like so many other countries, continues to face the challenge of the "digital divide". There remains a huge gap within the country between those who are part of the Internet revolution and those who are not. On the eve of India's fiftieth anniversary as a constitutional republic, the President of India warned that his country has "one of the world's largest reservoirs of technical personnel but also the world's largest number of illiterates, the largest number of people below the poverty line, and the largest number of children suffering from malnutrition."

India's success in embracing the Information Revolution is directly related to its success in producing large numbers of highly qualified technical and science graduates. The information networks these graduates are now building have a huge potential for spreading the benefits of education to the less fortunate.

## G. Demonstrating global solidarity

168. Creating an inclusive global market is one of humanity's central challenges in the twenty-first century. We are all impoverished if the poor are denied opportunities to make a living. And it is within our power to extend these opportunities to all.

169. The rich countries have an indispensable role to play by further opening their markets, by providing deeper and faster debt relief, and by giving more and better-focused development assistance.

### Trade access

170. Despite decades of liberalization, the world trading system remains burdened with tariffs and quotas. Most industrialized countries still protect their markets for agricultural products heavily, and all protect textiles — the two sectors in which the developing countries have a recognized comparative advantage. Moreover, agricultural subsidies in the industrialized countries drive down world prices, hurting farmers in poor countries even more.

171. Everybody pays a high price for these practices. The estimated cost per job "saved" in industrialized countries ranges from $30,000 to $200,000, depending on the industry. Global economic losses from agricultural protectionism may be as high as $150 billion per year — about $20 billion of it in lost exports for developing countries. Developing countries also cause a great deal of damage to themselves, however, by their own protectionist policies, in agriculture and elsewhere.

172. Rather than trying to freeze declining industries in place, which always fails in the long run, political leaders should make the case for upgrading skills through education and training, and for providing adjustment assistance.

173. The tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held recently in Bangkok, highlighted the need for better market access for the agricultural and industrial products exported by the least developed countries. That would be particularly helpful to sub-Saharan Africa.

174. **I urge the industrialized countries to consider granting duty-free and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries — and to be prepared to endorse that commitment at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in March 2001.**

175. A related issue of trade linkages has emerged in recent years. I refer to the desire of some to make trade liberalization conditional on the developing countries' meeting certain standards in the areas of labour, the environment and human rights. This issue must be handled with great care so that it does not become yet another pretext for protectionism.

176. I propose a different course. First, in most of these areas agreements already exist on universal values and common standards — the fruit of many conferences and long negotiations. What is needed now is for states to live up to their obligations, and for the relevant United Nations agencies to be given the resources and support to help them. If that means that the world should have a more robust global environmental organization, for example, or that the International Labour Organization needs to be strengthened, then let us consider those possibilities.

177. Second, global companies must play a leadership role. At relatively little if any cost to themselves, they can, in their own corporate domains, apply good practices everywhere they operate. This would have a beneficial demonstration effect throughout the world. That is why I have invited the business community to join me in a "Global Compact" to enact in their own corporate practices a set of core values in three areas: labour standards, human rights and the environment (see box 4). This initiative has been endorsed by a wide variety of business associations, labour groups and non-governmental organizations — and I intend to announce soon the first business leaders who are joining us to make the Global Compact an everyday reality.

### Debt relief

178. High levels of external debt are a crushing burden on economic growth in many of the poorest countries. Debt servicing requirements in hard currency prevent them from making adequate investments in education and health care, and from responding effectively to natural disasters and other emergencies. Debt relief for those heavily indebted poor countries must, therefore, be an integral part of the international community's contribution to development.

Box 4

**The Global Compact: a framework for United Nations–private sector partnerships**

Launched by the Secretary-General early in 1999, the Global Compact is a joint undertaking of the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Compact seeks to engage corporations in the promotion of equitable labour standards, respect for human rights and the protection of the environment. Corporations are asked to translate commitments to general principles in these three areas into concrete management practices. The Global Compact is based on the conviction that weaving universal values into the fabric of global markets and corporate practices will help advance broad societal goals while securing open markets.

To help pursue this ambitious agenda the Compact team at the United Nations has created a web site that provides information on the Compact and access to extensive United Nations country-based data banks. It describes corporate "best practice" in the areas of human rights, labour standards and protection of the environment, and promotes dialogue on supportive partnership programmes. The web site can be accessed at http//:unglobalcompact.org.

The Global Compact is actively supported by:

- Global business associations: the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Organization of Employers, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development, the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum and Business for Social Responsibility.
- Other global associations that have joined, or are considering doing so, include: the International Fertilizer Industry Association, the International Federation of Consulting Engineers, the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry, the International Iron and Steel Institute, the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association and the International Council of Chemical Associations.
- The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.
- Issue-oriented non-governmental organizations dealing with the environment, human rights and development.

179. Repeated rescheduling of these countries' bilateral debts has not significantly reduced their overall indebtedness. In 1996, therefore, the international donor community launched an initiative to reduce these countries' debt to sustainable levels — the so-called HIPC initiative. In the three years since its adoption, however, only four countries have fully qualified. Another nine are reaching that point, while five others are engaged in preliminary discussions. But progress has been slow.

180. A proposed expansion of the HIPC programme — agreed by the Cologne Summit of the G-8 in June 1999 and endorsed by the international financial institutions in September — provides for deeper, faster and broader debt relief. But it has yet to be implemented. Other obstacles remain. For instance, there is no mechanism for handling the large-scale restructuring of debt owed to foreign lenders by many private borrowers in the banking and corporate sector in developing countries.

181. **I call upon the donor countries and the international financial institutions to consider wiping off their books all official debts of the heavily indebted poor countries in return for those countries making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction.**

182. In designing such national poverty reduction programmes, governments are encouraged to consult closely with civil society.

183. I would go a step further and propose that, in the future, we consider an entirely new approach to handling the debt problem. The main components of such an approach could include immediate cancellation of the debts owed by countries that have suffered major conflicts or natural disasters; expanding the number of countries in the HIPC scheme by allowing them to qualify on grounds of poverty alone; pegging debt repayments at a maximum percentage of foreign exchange earnings; and establishing a debt arbitration process to balance the interests of creditors and sovereign debtors and introduce greater discipline into their relations.

184. Let us, above all, be clear that, without a convincing programme of debt relief to start the new millennium, our objective of halving world poverty by 2015 will be only a pipe dream.

### Official development assistance

185. Development assistance — the third pillar of support by the international community — has been in steady decline for several decades. There are some signs that this decline has now begun to flatten out but, despite recent increases by five countries, no general upward momentum is yet visible (see fig. 5). While it is true that private investment flows have increased significantly, many poor countries are not yet fully equipped to attract such investment.

186. Additional aid flows should be deployed to support the kinds of priorities I have described: programmes that encourage growth and help the poor. Aid should also promote domestic and foreign investment opportunities. For example, it could perhaps be used to offset some of the risk premium of private investment in poor countries. The private sector can also be helpful in providing pre-investment assistance — as in the case of the partnership between UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce to produce investment guides for the least developed countries (see box 5).

187. If external assistance programmes are to yield the best results, their administrative burdens on the countries they are supposed to help must be significantly reduced, and those countries must play a full part in designing them. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework is a useful — and by all accounts, a successful — step in that direction (see box 6) — as are changes recently introduced by other agencies, including the World Bank. But bilateral programmes still need to be far better coordinated.

188. As a result of globalization, the world's commitment to the poor is slowly coming to be seen, not only as a moral imperative but also as a common interest. Each country must still take primary responsibility for its own programmes of economic growth and poverty reduction. But ridding the world of the scourge of extreme poverty is a challenge to every one of us. It is one that we must not fail to meet.

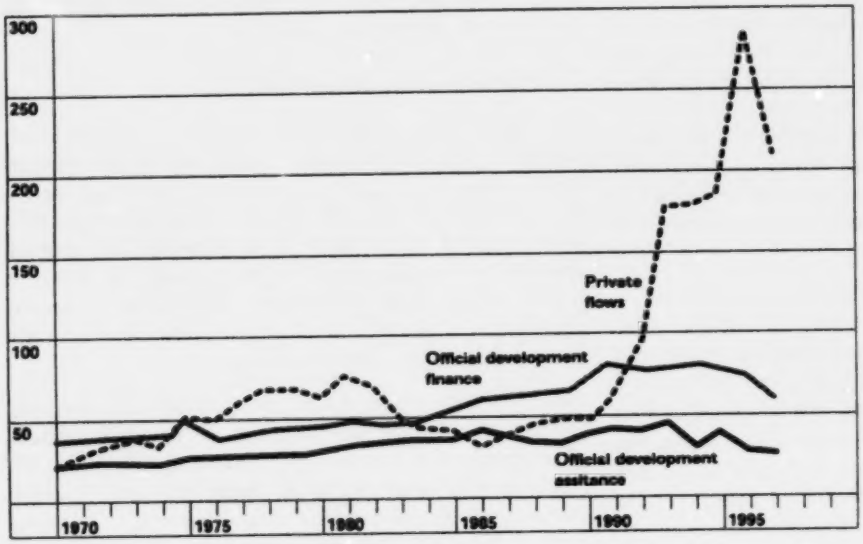



**Figure 5**
**Financial flows to developing countries**
(Billions of United States dollars — constant 1995 dollars)

*Source*: World Bank, *Global Development Finance*, 1998.

Box 5

**Attracting investment to the poorest countries: a United Nations/private sector initiative**

Foreign direct investment (FDI) contributes greatly to economic growth in developing countries. Most of this investment goes to the industrialized world, but an increasing share, about one quarter of the total, is now going to developing countries. In the last 10 years these private capital flows have become a far more important source of development finance for many developing countries than official development assistance.

But FDI does not flow equally to all parts of the developing world. Asia receives almost 20 times more foreign investment than sub-Saharan Africa, where the need is greatest.

Why do the poorest and most needy countries get the lowest levels of private capital investment? The reasons are complex. Poorly functioning capital and labour markets, weak governance, and high costs of transportation are part of the problem. But even when developing countries undertake the reforms necessary to address these problems they often still do not receive the FDI they so desperately need.

Often, the key challenge is to inform prospective investors that the needed reforms have been made, and that real investment opportunities exist. Doing precisely that is a major goal of the joint initiative undertaken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

This initiative includes publication of a series of investment guides, describing investment opportunities and conditions in the least developed countries, and promoting dialogue between governments and potential investors. A central objective is to help strengthen the capacity of the poorest countries to attract investment.

Twenty-eight companies — household names in many parts of the world — are supporting the partnership and contributing to the UNCTAD-ICC project, as are China, Finland, France, India and Norway.

The UNCTAD-ICC project is one of many public-private cooperative projects now being pursued at the United Nations. With aid flows having declined in the 1990s such collaboration is becoming an increasingly important means of assisting the development process in the poorest countries.

Box 6
**Cooperating for development: the United Nations Development Assistance Framework**

Development cooperation has changed dramatically in the last decade, with much greater emphasis being placed on human rights, human development and environmental concerns. Demands for assistance have increased; resources to meet those demands have declined.

The United Nations has increasingly been required to do more with less. This, in turn, has required greater collaboration between our agencies and more partnerships with actors in civil society and the private sector. As the number of development agencies and non-governmental organizations in the field has increased, the need for better coordination has grown commensurately.

To bring greater collaboration, coherence and impact to the Organization's work at the country level, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was introduced in 1997 as part of the Secretary-General's reform package. UNDAF is a common framework with a common vision and is based on a common country assessment.

UNDAF seeks to improve coordination and avoid duplication of effort between United Nations agencies, national governments and other partners in support of country priorities. It is currently being implemented in 74 countries around the world, each under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. It is part of a broader trend in the United Nations system to treat issues like development in a more comprehensive way.

UNDAF also represents a shift in development planning and implementation from Headquarters to the country level. In India, for example, UNDAF facilitated collaboration between the United Nations and the Government in dealing with the twin challenges of gender and decentralization. In Romania, UNDAF helped elaborate the first National Strategy on Poverty, which in turn enabled the Government to mobilize additional resources from other donors.

In its short existence, the achievements of UNDAF clearly demonstrate that agencies operating cooperatively can achieve far more than when they act on their own.

# IV. Freedom from fear

189. The world is now in the fifty-fifth year without war among the major powers — the longest such period in the entire history of the modern system of states. In the area of Europe that now comprises the European Union — where most modern wars started — a security community has emerged: an association of states characterized by dependable expectations that disputes will be resolved by peaceful means.

190. Moreover, nearly five decades of cold war — sustained by a nuclear balance of terror that could have annihilated us all instantly — have passed. Some observers have lamented that fact, claiming that bipolarity was stable, predictable and helped keep the peace. But that was hardly true in the developing world: there the cold war was a period of frequent armed conflict fuelled by both sides in the bipolar world. Once the cold war ended, that source of external political and material support ceased to exist.

191. Freeing the United Nations from the shackles of the cold war also enabled it to play a more significant role. The 1990s saw an upsurge both in our peacekeeping and in our peacemaking activities: three times more peace agreements were negotiated and signed during that decade than in the previous three combined.

192. The frequency of inter-state warfare has been declining for some time. (For the corresponding decline in refugee numbers, see fig. 6.) Economic globalization has largely eliminated the benefits of territorial acquisition, while the destructiveness of modern warfare has increased its costs. The near-doubling in the number of democracies since 1990 has been equally important, because established democratic states, for a variety of reasons, rarely fight each other militarily (see fig. 7).

193. Wars since the 1990s have been mainly internal. They have been brutal, claiming more than 5 million lives. They have violated, not so much borders, as people. Humanitarian conventions have been routinely flouted, civilians and aid workers have become strategic targets, and children have been forced to become killers. Often driven by political ambition or greed, these wars have preyed on ethnic and religious differences, they are often sustained by external economic interests, and they are fed by a hyperactive and in large part illicit global arms market.

194. In the wake of these conflicts, a new understanding of the concept of security is evolving. Once synonymous with the defence of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence.

195. The need for a more human-centred approach to security is reinforced by the continuing dangers that weapons of mass destruction, most notably nuclear weapons, pose to humanity: their very name reveals their scope and their intended objective, if they were ever used.

196. As we look ahead, we can see real risks that resource depletion, especially freshwater scarcities, as well as severe forms of environmental degradation, may increase social and political tensions in unpredictable but potentially dangerous ways.

197. In short, these new security challenges require us to think creatively, and to adapt our traditional approaches to better meet the needs of our new era. But one time-honoured precept holds more firmly today than ever: it all begins with prevention.

## A. Preventing deadly conflicts

198. There is near-universal agreement that prevention is preferable to cure, and that strategies of prevention must address the root causes of conflicts, not simply their violent symptoms. Consensus is not always matched by practical actions, however. Political leaders find it hard to sell prevention policies abroad to their public at home, because the costs are palpable and immediate, while the benefits — an undesirable or tragic future event that does not occur — are more difficult for the leaders to convey and the public to grasp. Thus prevention is, first and foremost, a challenge of political leadership.

199. If we are to be successful at preventing deadly conflicts, we must have a clear understanding of their causes. Not all wars are alike; therefore no single strategy will be universally effective. What is different about the wars that people have suffered since the beginning of the 1990s?

200. Several major conflicts in the past decade were wars of post-communist succession, in which callous

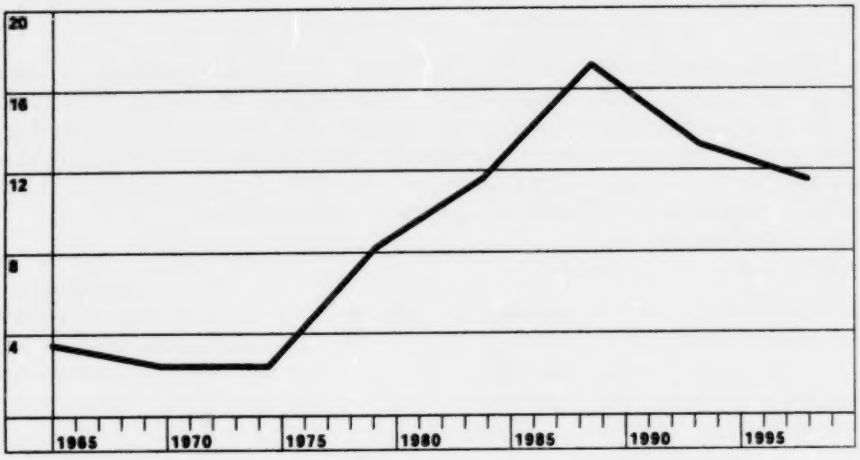



**Figure 6**
**Global refugee population, 1965-1998**
(Millions)

*Source*: UNHCR, 2000.

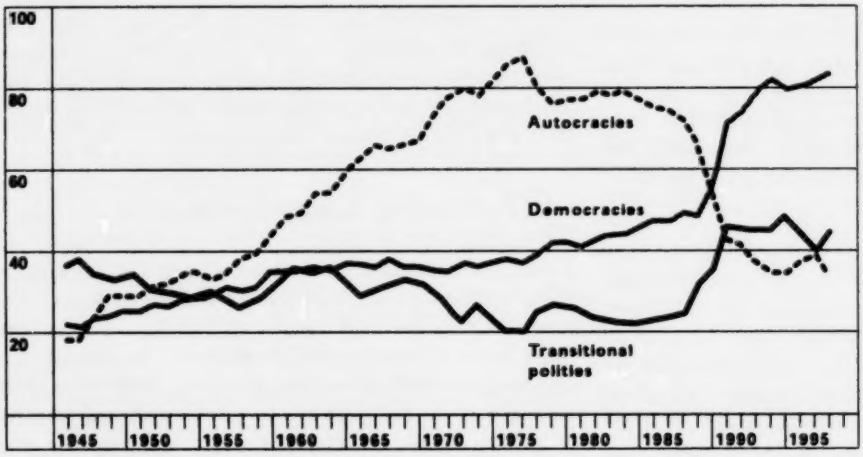



**Figure 7**
**Democratic, autocratic and transitional polities, 1946-1998**

*Source*: Marshall, derived from data from the Polity III dataset, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 1999.

leaders exploited the most primitive forms of ethnic nationalism and religious differences to retain or acquire power. Some of those conflicts have already receded into the history books — along with those leaders — and it is to be hoped that the remainder soon will. The majority of wars today are wars among the poor. Why is this the case?

201. Poor countries have fewer economic and political resources with which to manage conflicts. They lack the capacity to make extensive financial transfers to minority groups or regions, for example, and they may fear that their state apparatus is too fragile to countenance devolution. Both are routine instruments in richer countries.

202. What this means is that every single measure I described in the previous section — every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth — is a step towards conflict prevention. All who are engaged in conflict prevention and development, therefore — the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, governments and civil society organizations — must address these challenges in a more integrated fashion.

203. We can do more. In many poor countries at war, the condition of poverty is coupled with sharp ethnic or religious cleavages. Almost invariably, the rights of subordinate groups are insufficiently respected, the institutions of government are insufficiently inclusive and the allocation of society's resources favours the dominant faction over others.

204. The solution is clear, even if difficult to achieve in practice: to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented. Wounds that have festered for a long time will not heal overnight. Nor can confidence be built or dialogues develop while fresh wounds are being inflicted. There are no quick fixes, no short cuts. Every group needs to become convinced that the state belongs to all people.

205. Some armed conflicts today are driven by greed, not grievance. Whereas war is costly for society as a whole, it nevertheless may be profitable for some. In such cases, often the control over natural resources is at stake, drugs are often involved, the conflicts are abetted by opportunistic neighbours, and private sector actors are complicit — buying ill-gotten gains, helping to launder funds and feeding a steady flow of weapons into the conflict zone.

206. The best preventive strategy in this context is transparency: "naming and shaming". Civil society actors have an enormous role to play in this regard, but governments and the Security Council must exercise their responsibility. Greater social responsibility on the part of global companies, including banks, is also essential.

207. Finally, successful strategies for prevention require us to ensure that old conflicts do not start up again, and that the necessary support is provided for post-conflict peace-building. I regret to say that we do not fully enjoy that level of support in most of our missions.

208. While prevention is the core feature of our efforts to promote human security, we must recognize that even the best preventive and deterrence strategies can fail. Other measures, therefore, may be called for. One is to strengthen our commitment to protecting vulnerable people.

## B. Protecting the vulnerable

209. Despite the existence of numerous international conventions intended to protect the vulnerable, the brutalization of civilians, particularly women and children, continues in armed conflicts. Women have become especially vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation, while children are easy prey for forced labour and are often coerced into becoming fighters. Civilian populations and infrastructure have become covers for the operations of rebel movements, targets for reprisal and victims of the chaotic brutalities that too often follow breakdowns in state authority. In the most extreme cases, the innocent become the principal targets of ethnic cleansers and *genocidaires*.

210. International conventions have traditionally looked to states to protect civilians, but today this expectation is threatened in several ways. First, states are sometimes the principal perpetrators of violence against the very citizens that humanitarian law requires them to protect. Second, non-state combatants, particularly in collapsed states, are often either ignorant or contemptuous of humanitarian law. Third, international conventions do not adequately address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced persons, or women and children in complex emergencies.

211. **To strengthen protection, we must reassert the centrality of international humanitarian and human rights law. We must strive to end the culture of impunity — which is why the creation of the International Criminal Court is so important. We must also devise new strategies to meet changing needs.**

212. New approaches in this area could include establishing a mechanism to monitor compliance by all parties with existing provisions of international humanitarian law. Stronger legal standards are needed to provide for the protection of humanitarian workers. Consideration should also be given to an international convention regulating the actions of private and corporate security firms, which we see involved in internal wars in growing numbers.

213. Greater use of information technology can also help to reduce the pain and burdens of complex emergencies for the people involved; one example is a programme called "Child Connect", which helps reunite children and parents who have been separated in wars and natural disaster (see box 7).

214. Of one thing we may be certain: without protecting the vulnerable, our peace initiatives will be both fragile and illusory.

## C. Addressing the dilemma of intervention

215. In my address to the General Assembly last September, I called on Member States to unite in the pursuit of more effective policies to stop organized mass murder and egregious violations of human rights. Although I emphasized that intervention embraced a wide continuum of responses, from diplomacy to armed action, it was the latter option that generated most controversy in the debate that followed.

216. Some critics were concerned that the concept of "humanitarian intervention" could become a cover for gratuitous interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Others felt that it might encourage secessionist movements deliberately to provoke governments into committing gross violations of human rights in order to trigger external interventions that would aid their cause. Still others noted that there is little consistency in the practice of intervention, owing to its inherent difficulties and costs as well as perceived national interests — except that weak states are far more likely to be subjected to it than strong ones.

217. I recognize both the force and the importance of these arguments. I also accept that the principles of sovereignty and non-interference offer vital protection to small and weak states. But to the critics I would pose this question: if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how *should* we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica — to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?

218. We confront a real dilemma. Few would disagree that both the defence of humanity and the defence of sovereignty are principles that must be supported. Alas, that does not tell us which principle should prevail when they are in conflict.

219. Humanitarian intervention is a sensitive issue, fraught with political difficulty and not susceptible to easy answers. But surely no legal principle — not even sovereignty — can ever shield crimes against humanity. Where such crimes occur and peaceful attempts to halt them have been exhausted, the Security Council has a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community. The fact that we cannot protect people everywhere is no reason for doing nothing when we can. Armed intervention must always remain the option of last resort, but in the face of mass murder it is an option that cannot be relinquished.

## D. Strengthening peace operations

220. With the end of the cold war confrontation and the paralysis it had induced in the Security Council, the decade of the 1990s became one of great activism for the United Nations. More peace operations were mounted in that decade than in the previous four combined, and we developed new approaches to post-conflict peace-building and placed new emphasis on conflict prevention.

221. While traditional peacekeeping had focused mainly on monitoring ceasefires, today's complex peace operations are very different. Their objective, in essence, is to assist the parties engaged in conflict to pursue their interests through political channels instead. To that end, the United Nations helps to create and strengthen political institutions and to broaden their base. We work alongside governments,

Box 7

**Child Connect: using the Information Revolution to find lost children**

In wars and natural disasters children often get separated from their parents and reuniting them can pose an immense challenge for aid agencies. The International Rescue Committee's "Child Connect" project was designed to solve this problem. The project uses a shared database open to all the agencies in the field seeking to reunite lost children with their parents. These agencies can submit data and photographs of unaccompanied children as well as search requests from parents. Search procedures that once took months can now be completed in minutes, saving both children and parents much heartache.

For Child Connect to realize its potential, all the tracing agencies in a region need to be able to submit and review the lost-and-found data on a regular basis. The easiest way to do this, of course, is via the Internet, but armed conflicts rarely occur in places with robust Internet or communications infrastructures.

In Kosovo, the International Rescue Committee created a shared satellite/wireless Internet network in Pristina (www.ipko.org). Every United Nations agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, several national missions, and the majority of non-governmental organizations are connected to the Internet 24 hours per day via the network.

Because the marginal cost of this technology is so low, the project is also able to provide free Internet access to the university, hospital, libraries, schools, local media and local non-governmental organizations. So not only are international organizations getting robust communications links and saving money, they are helping to support Kosovar civil society and build a long-term Internet infrastructure for Kosovo. The project has now been turned over to an independent local non-governmental organization that is already completely self-sustaining.

This project can serve as a model for future humanitarian emergencies. By building a shared Internet infrastructure, international organizations will benefit from more reliable communications at a much lower cost and they will be able to take advantage of shared access to databases and other Internet-based applications to improve their effectiveness.

When the crisis ends, the infrastructure can be left in place and local people trained to maintain it.

non-governmental organizations and local citizens' groups to provide emergency relief, demobilize former fighters and reintegrate them into society, clear mines, organize and conduct elections, and promote sustainable development practices.

222. International assistance to rebuild the economy is an essential complement to this work. People will quickly become disillusioned with fledgling institutions, and even the peace process itself, if they see no prospect for any material improvement in their condition. Post-conflict peace-building has helped to prevent the breakdown of numerous peace agreements, and to build the foundations for sustainable peace.

223. We can claim significant successes among our peace operations in the last decade or so, beginning with Namibia in the late 1980s, and including Mozambique, El Salvador, the Central African Republic, Eastern Slavonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and, at least partially, Cambodia. We also encountered tragic failures, none more so than Rwanda and the fall of Srebrenica and the other safe areas in Bosnia. The many reasons for those failures, including those attributable to the United Nations Secretariat, are discussed frankly and in considerable detail in two reports I issued late last year.

224. The structural weaknesses of United Nations peace operations, however, only Member States can fix. Our system for launching operations has sometimes been compared to a volunteer fire department, but that description is too generous. Every time there is a fire, we must first find fire engines and the funds to run them before we can start dousing any flames. The present system relies almost entirely on last minute, ad hoc arrangements that guarantee delay, with respect to the provision of civilian personnel even more so than military.

225. Although we have understandings for military standby arrangements with Member States, the availability of the designated forces is unpredictable and very few are in a state of high readiness. Resource constraints preclude us even from being able to deploy a mission headquarters rapidly.

226. On the civilian side, we have been starkly reminded in Kosovo and East Timor how difficult it is to recruit qualified personnel for missions. Where do we find police officers quickly, or judges, or people to run correctional institutions — to focus only on law enforcement needs? A more systematic approach is necessary here as well.

227. To bring greater clarity to where we stand and how we can hope to progress with regard to United Nations peace operations, I have established a high-level panel, which will review all aspects of peace operations, from the doctrinal to the logistical. It will suggest ways forward that are acceptable politically and make sense operationally.

228. I expect that the panel's report will be completed in time to enable the Millennium Assembly to consider its recommendations.

## E. Targeting sanctions

229. During the 1990s, the United Nations established more sanctions regimes than ever before. Sanctions, an integral element of the collective security provisions of the Charter, offer the Security Council an important instrument to enforce its decisions, situated on a continuum between mere verbal condemnation and recourse to armed force. They include arms embargoes, the imposition of trade and financial restrictions, interruptions of relations by air and sea, and diplomatic isolation.

230. Sanctions have had an uneven track record in inducing compliance with Security Council resolutions. In some cases, little if any effort has gone into monitoring and enforcing them. In many cases, neighbouring countries that bear much of the loss from ensuring compliance have not been helped by the rest of the international community and, as a result, have allowed sanctions to become porous.

231. When robust and comprehensive economic sanctions are directed against authoritarian regimes, a different problem is encountered. Then it is usually the people who suffer, not the political elites whose behaviour triggered the sanctions in the first place. Indeed, those in power, perversely, often benefit from such sanctions by their ability to control and profit from black market activity, and by exploiting them as a pretext for eliminating domestic sources of political opposition.

232. Because economic sanctions have proved to be such a blunt and even counter-productive instrument, a number of governments, and numerous civil society organizations and think tanks around the world, have

explored ways to make them smarter by better targeting them. Switzerland has led an effort to design instruments of targeted financial sanctions, including drafting model national legislation required to implement them, and Germany is supporting work on how to make arms embargoes and other forms of targeted boycotts more effective. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Canada have also contributed to the debate on how to target sanctions more effectively.

233. **These efforts are now sufficiently well advanced to merit serious consideration by Member States. I invite the Security Council, in particular, to bear them in mind when designing and applying sanctions regimes.**

## F. Pursuing arms reductions

234. The post-cold-war era has seen both gains and setbacks in the realm of disarmament. On the positive side, the Ottawa Convention banning landmines and the Chemical Weapons Convention have both entered into force. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has been concluded, nuclear safeguards have been strengthened and nuclear-weapon-free zones now embrace all of the southern hemisphere. Nuclear weapons numbers have almost halved since 1982, and world military expenditures declined by some 30 per cent between 1990 and 1998 (see figs. 8 and 9).

235. The rest of the picture is much less encouraging. Little meaningful progress has been achieved in limiting the proliferation of small arms. The nuclear non-proliferation regime has suffered major blows as a result of clandestine nuclear weapon programmes, the nuclear tests in South Asia and the unwillingness of key states to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

236. Advances in biotechnology are increasing the potential threat posed by biological weapons, while negotiations on a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention are being unnecessarily prolonged. For three years in a row now, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has not engaged in any negotiations because its members have been unable to agree on disarmament priorities.

237. I cannot here review the entire arms control spectrum. Instead, I focus on two categories of weapon that are of special concern: small arms and light weapons, because they currently kill most people in most wars; and nuclear weapons, because of their continuing terrifying potential for mass destruction.

### Small arms

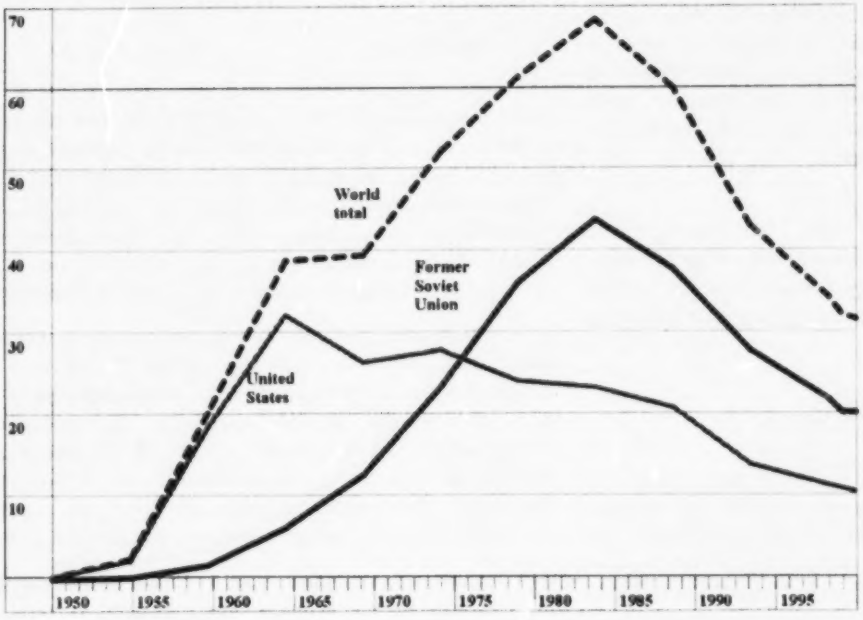
238. The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems — and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as "weapons of mass destruction". Yet there is still no global non-proliferation regime to limit their spread, as there is for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

239. Small arms proliferation is not merely a security issue; it is also an issue of human rights and of development. The proliferation of small arms sustains and exacerbates armed conflicts. It endangers peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. It undermines respect for international humanitarian law. It threatens legitimate but weak governments and it benefits terrorists as well as the perpetrators of organized crime.

240. Much of the cold war's small arms surplus finished up in the world's most dangerous conflict zones and, as the number of weapons in circulation increased, their price declined, making access to them ever easier even in the poorest countries. In parts of Africa in the mid-1990s, for example, deadly assault rifles could be bought for the price of a chicken or a bag of maize. Reducing the toll caused by these weapons will be difficult, not least because of the extraordinary number in circulation, which some estimates put as high as 500 million.

241. An estimated 50 to 60 per cent of the world's trade in small arms is legal — but legally exported weapons often find their way into the illicit market. The task of effective proliferation control is made far harder than it needs to be because of irresponsible behaviour on the part of some states and lack of capacity by others, together with the shroud of secrecy that veils much of the arms trade. Member States must act to increase transparency in arms transfers if we are to make any progress. I would also urge that they support regional disarmament measures, like the moratorium on the importing, exporting or manufacturing of light weapons in West Africa.

242. Even if all arms transfers could be eliminated, however, the problem posed by the many millions of

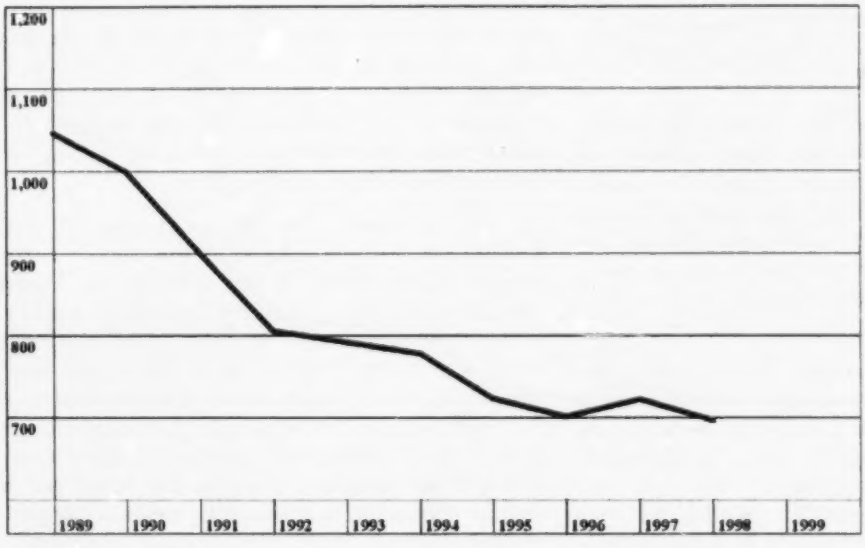



## Figure 8

**Nuclear stockpiles, estimated, 1950-2000**

(Thousands of weapons)

*Source* Natural Resources Defense Council, 2000




## Figure 9

**World military expenditures, 1989-1998**

(Billions of United States dollars - constant 1995 dollars)

*Note* 1991 estimated

*Source* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook, 1999*

illicitly held small arms already in circulation in the world's war zones would remain.

243. Because most conflict-prone poor countries lack the capacity to detect and seize illicit weapons, a more promising path may be the use of market incentives. Outright buy-back programmes may simply stimulate arms imports from neighbouring countries, but non-monetary reimbursement schemes have worked in Albania, El Salvador, Mozambique and Panama. In return for weapons, individuals may receive tools, such as sewing machines, bicycles, hoes and construction materials, and entire communities have been provided with new schools, health-care services and road repairs.

244. Not only governments but also the private sector can and should help fund such programmes. This would be a particularly appropriate contribution by major international corporations that have a presence in conflict-prone regions.

245. Controlling the proliferation of illicit weapons is a necessary first step towards the non-proliferation of small arms. These weapons must be brought under the control of states, and states must be held accountable for their transfer. The United Nations is convening a conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in 2001, in which I hope civil society organizations will be invited to participate fully.

246. **I urge Member States to take advantage of this conference to start taking serious actions that will curtail the illicit traffic in small arms.**

247. The many recent expressions of concern about small arms proliferation are a welcome sign that the importance of the issue is being recognized, but words alone do nothing to prevent the ongoing slaughter of innocent people. Dialogue is critical, but we must match the rhetoric of concern with the substance of practical action.

### Nuclear weapons

248. Let me now turn to nuclear weapons. When the bipolar balance of nuclear terror passed into history, the concern with nuclear weapons also seemed to drift from public consciousness. But some 35,000 nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of the nuclear powers, with thousands still deployed on hair-trigger alert. Whatever rationale these weapons may once have had has long since dwindled. Political, moral and legal constraints on actually using them further undermine their strategic utility without, however, reducing the risks of inadvertent war or proliferation.

249. The objective of nuclear non-proliferation is not helped by the fact that the nuclear weapon states continue to insist that those weapons in their hands enhance security, while in the hands of others they are a threat to world peace.

250. If we were making steady progress towards disarmament, this situation would be less alarming. Unfortunately the reverse is true. Not only are the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks stalled, but there are no negotiations at all covering the many thousands of so-called tactical nuclear weapons in existence, or the weapons of any nuclear power other than those of the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

251. Moreover, unless plans to deploy missile defences are devised with the agreement of all concerned parties, the progress achieved thus far in reducing the number of nuclear weapons may be jeopardized. Confidence-building is required to reassure states that their nuclear deterrent capabilities will not be negated.

252. Above all else, we need a reaffirmation of political commitment at the highest levels to reducing the dangers that arise both from existing nuclear weapons and from further proliferation.

253. **To help focus attention on the risks we confront and on the opportunities we have to reduce them, I propose that consideration be given to convening a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.**

# V. Sustaining our future

254. The founders of the United Nations set out, in the words of the Charter, to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom — above all, freedom from want and freedom from fear. In 1945, they could not have anticipated, however, the urgent need we face today to realize yet a third: the freedom of future generations to sustain their lives on this planet. We are failing to provide that freedom. On the contrary, we have been plundering our children's future heritage to pay for environmentally unsustainable practices in the present.

255. The natural environment performs for us, free of charge, basic services without which our species could not survive. The ozone layer screens out ultraviolet rays from the sun that harm people, animals and plants. Ecosystems help purify the air we breathe and the water we drink. They convert wastes into resources and reduce atmospheric carbon levels that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Biodiversity provides a bountiful store of medicines and food products, and it maintains genetic variety that reduces vulnerability to pests and diseases. But we are degrading, and in some cases destroying, the ability of the environment to continue providing these life-sustaining services for us.

256. During the past hundred years, the natural environment has borne the stresses imposed by a fourfold increase in human numbers and an eighteenfold growth in world economic output. With world population projected to increase to nearly 9 billion by 2050, from the current 6 billion, the potential for doing irreparable environmental harm is obvious. One of two jobs worldwide — in agriculture, forestry and fisheries — depends directly on the sustainability of ecosystems. Even more important, so does the planet's health — and our own.

257. Environmental sustainability is everybody's challenge. In the rich countries, the by-products of industrial and agribusiness production poison soils and waterways. In the developing countries, massive deforestation, harmful farming practices and uncontrolled urbanization are major causes of environmental degradation. Carbon dioxide emissions are widely believed to be a major source of global climate change, and the burning of fossil fuels is their main source. The one fifth of the world's population living in the industrialized countries accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the world's total consumption of energy, but the developing world's share is rising rapidly.

258. Our goal must be to meet the economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of the planet to provide for the needs of future generations.

259. We have made progress since 1972, when the United Nations convened the first global conference ever to address environmental issues. That conference stimulated the creation of environmental ministries throughout the world, established the United Nations Environment Programme and led to a vast increase in the number of civil society organizations promoting environmental concerns.

260. Twenty years later, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development provided the foundations for agreements on climate change, forests and biodiversity. It adopted an indicative policy framework intended to help achieve the goal of sustainable development — in rich and poor countries alike.

261. Perhaps the single most successful international environmental agreement to date has been the Montreal Protocol, in which states accepted the need to phase out the use of ozone-depleting substances (see box 8).

262. Nevertheless, we must face up to an inescapable reality: the challenges of sustainability simply overwhelm the adequacy of our responses. With some honourable exceptions, our responses are too few, too little and too late.

263. This section is intended to convey that reality to the Millennium Summit with a particular sense of urgency. The fact that environmental issues were never seriously considered in the nearly 18 months during which the General Assembly debated which subjects to include in the Summit's agenda makes it plain how little priority is accorded to these extraordinarily serious challenges for all humankind. Leadership at the very highest level is imperative if we are to bequeath a liveable Earth to our children — and theirs.

264. The 10-year follow-up to the Conference on Environment and Development will be held in 2002. It is my hope that the world's leaders will take advantage of the time remaining to revitalize the sustainability debate and to prepare the ground for the adoption of concrete and meaningful actions by that time.

Box 8
**Protecting the ozone layer: an environmental success story**

In the early 1970s evidence had accumulated showing that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were damaging the ozone layer in the stratosphere and increasing the amount of ultraviolet B (UV-B) radiation reaching Earth's surface. Since the ozone layer protects humans, animals and plants from the damaging effects of UV-B radiation, the steady increase in CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances constituted a major potential health hazard. But it took a decade and a half of increasingly intensive effort to achieve an agreement that would resolve the problem.

The 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was a landmark international environmental agreement. It has been remarkably successful. Production of the most damaging ozone-depleting substances was eliminated, except for a few critical uses, by 1996 in developed countries and should be phased out by 2010 in developing countries. Without the Protocol the levels of ozone-depleting substances would have been five times higher than they are today, and surface UV-B radiation levels would have doubled at mid-latitudes in the northern hemisphere. On current estimates the CFC concentration in the ozone layer is expected to recover to pre-1980 levels by the year 2050.

Prior to the Protocol intergovernmental negotiations on their own failed to mobilize sufficient support for the far-reaching measures that were needed. But intensive lobbying by civil society organizations, the presentation of overwhelming scientific evidence — and the discovery of the huge ozone hole over Antarctica — eventually created the consensus necessary for the agreement to be signed.

## A. Coping with climate change

265. Spurred by a quadrupling of carbon emissions during the past half-century alone, Earth's atmosphere is warming at an increasing rate (see fig. 10). The hottest 14 years since systematic measurements began in the 1860s have all occurred in the past two decades; the summer of 1998 was the hottest on record, and the winter of 1999-2000 may turn out to be the warmest. Average temperatures are projected to increase further, by 1.2° to 3.5° C (2° to 6° F) over the course of the present century — which would melt glaciers and the polar ice caps, raise sea levels and pose threats to hundreds of millions of coastal dwellers while drowning low-lying islands altogether.

266. Portents of this future are already visible. As the warming trend has accelerated, weather patterns have become more volatile and more extreme, while the severity of weather-related disasters has escalated. The cost of natural disasters in 1998 alone exceeded the cost of all such disasters in the entire decade of the 1980s (see fig. 11). Tens of thousands of mostly poor people were killed that year, and an estimated 25 million "environmental refugees" were forced from their homes. The damage wrought by these disasters has been exacerbated by unsustainable environmental practices and the fact that more and more poor people have little choice but to live in harm's way — on flood plains and unstable hillsides and in unsafe buildings.

267. Reducing the threat of global warming requires, above all, that carbon emissions be reduced. The burning of fossil fuels, which still provide more than 75 per cent of energy worldwide, produces most of these emissions. The rapidly expanding number of

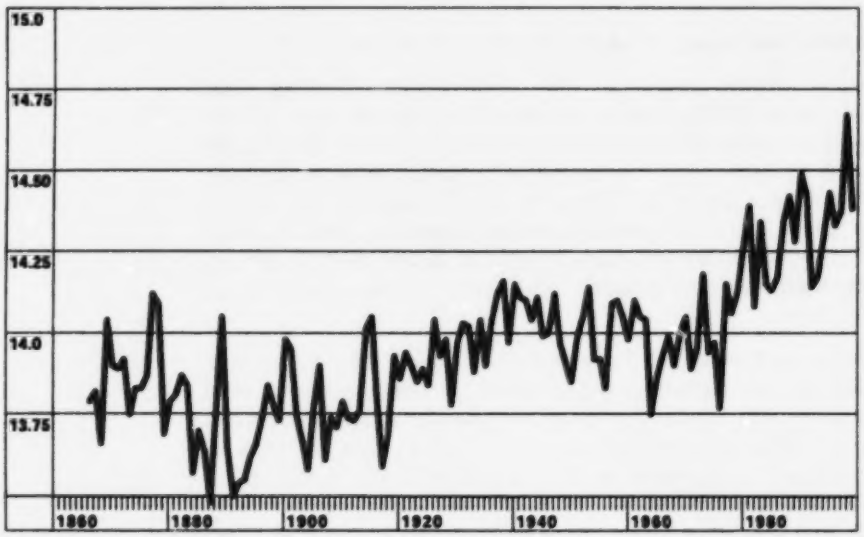



**Figure 10**
**Average temperature at the Earth's surface, 1860-1998**
(Degrees celsius)

*Source*: Goddard Institute, World Watch Institute, 1999.

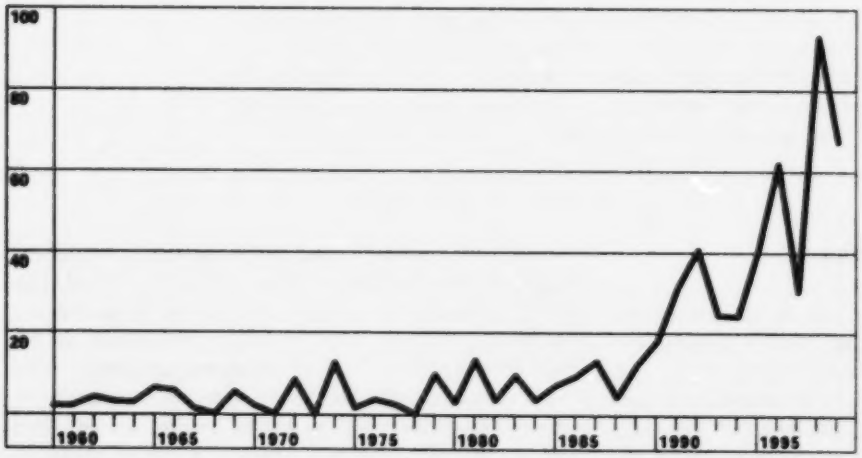



**Figure 11**
**Economic losses from weather-related natural disasters worldwide, 1960-1998**
(Billions of United States dollars, 1997)

*Source*: Munich Re Group.

automobiles around the globe threatens an even greater escalation in emissions. The need to promote energy-efficiency and greater reliance on renewable resources is obvious.

268. Further development of fuel cell, wind turbine, photovoltaic and cogeneration technologies will help. In the developing world, particularly in rural areas that are not connected to energy grids, the rapidly falling costs of solar cells and wind power have the potential to bring energy to the poor at reasonable costs, thereby also enhancing agricultural productivity and generating income.

269. Stabilizing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to a range that is considered safe will require overall reductions on the order of 60 per cent or more in the emission of the "greenhouse gases" that are responsible for global warming. Thus far, the international community has not found the political will needed to make the necessary changes.

270. Implementing the 1997 Kyoto Protocol would mark a significant advance by binding the industrialized countries to verifiable emission limitation and reduction targets averaging 5 per cent below 1990 levels, to be achieved over the period 2008-2012. Recognizing the economic roots of the climate change problem, the Protocol seeks to engage the private sector in the search for solutions. It does so by the use of market mechanisms that provide incentives for cutting emissions, and which stimulate investment and technology flows to developing countries that will help them achieve more sustainable patterns of industrialization (see box 9).

271. Although the first generation of Kyoto targets represent just one step towards what is needed to reduce global warming, their achievement would result in a sharp reduction in current rates of increase of greenhouse gas emissions by the industrialized countries (see fig. 12). Early action is essential. Without success, there will be little incentive for the further rounds of emission limitations that must follow, in which the developing countries will need to become progressively engaged.

272. **I call upon the Millennium Summit to promote the adoption and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Specifically, I urge those States whose ratifications are needed to bring it into effect to take the necessary action in time for entry into force by 2002, as a fitting celebration of our progress since Stockholm in 1972 and Rio in 1992.**

273. In several other areas, there are severe challenges for which we still lack remotely adequate responses.

## B. Confronting the water crisis

274. Global freshwater consumption rose sixfold between 1900 and 1995 — more than twice the rate of population growth. About one third of the world's population already lives in countries considered to be "water stressed" — that is, where consumption exceeds 10 per cent of total supply. If present trends continue, two out of every three people on Earth will live in that condition by 2025.

275. Groundwater supplies about one third of the world's population. The unsustainable, but largely unnoticed, exploitation of these water resources is a particular source of concern. The withdrawal of groundwater in quantities greater than nature's ability to renew it is widespread in parts of the Arabian Peninsula, China, India, Mexico, the former Soviet Union and the United States. In some cases, water tables are falling by 1 to 3 metres a year. In a world where 30 to 40 per cent of food production comes from irrigated lands, this is a critical issue for food security.

276. There is already fierce national competition over water for irrigation and power generation in some of the world's regions, which is likely to worsen as populations continue to grow. Today, the Middle East and North Africa are most seriously affected by water scarcity, but sub-Saharan Africa will join them over the next half-century as its population doubles and even triples.

277. Sheer shortages of freshwater are not the only problem. Fertilizer run-off and chemical pollution threaten both water quality and public health. More than one fifth of freshwater fish stocks are already vulnerable or endangered because of pollution or habitat modification.

278. The most serious immediate challenge is the fact that more than 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water, while half of humanity lacks adequate sanitation. In many developing countries, rivers downstream from large cities are little cleaner than open sewers. The health impact is devastating.

Box 9
**Using economic incentives to reduce global warming and promote investment in developing countries**

Addressing the challenge of climate change is one of the most important tasks of the twenty-first century. It will require major reductions in emissions of the so-called greenhouse gases that cause global warming. This in turn will require cleaner and more efficient technologies in the energy, transport and industrial industries if the greenhouse reduction targets specified by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol are to be met. Reductions can be achieved in a number of ways. One of the most ingenious of these, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), provides benefits for both industrial and developing countries.

The CDM allows industrial countries to gain emissions credits for climate-friendly investments in developing countries where these would reduce pre-existing levels of greenhouse emissions. Emission credits count towards the reduction targets that the industrial states have to meet.

The prospect of gaining emission credit provides incentives for rich countries to make energy-saving investments in poor countries. The fact that the emissions savings have to be verified and certified provides incentives to create a new service industry dedicated to this task. The climate-friendly investment helps build sustainability in the developing country.

The CDM and other Kyoto mechanisms seek to use incentives to engage the private sector in the vital task of reducing global warming. They are very much in tune with the spirit of the times.

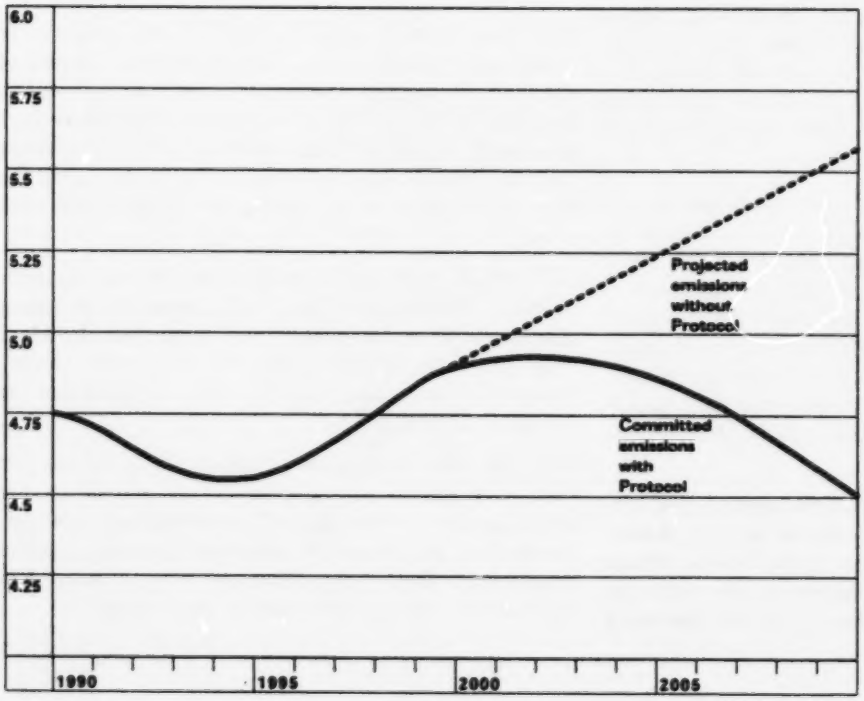



**Figure 12**
**Projected impact of the Kyoto Protocol on emissions of greenhouse gases**
(Gigatons of carbon)

*Source*: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, 2000.

279. Unsafe water and poor sanitation cause an estimated 80 per cent of all diseases in the developing world. The annual death toll exceeds 5 million, 10 times the number killed in wars, on average, each year. More than half of the victims are children. No single measure would do more to reduce disease and save lives in the developing world than bringing safe water and adequate sanitation to all.

280. The World Water Forum's Ministerial Conference, which met in March 2000, considered a set of realistically achievable targets on water and sanitation. I ask the Millennium Summit to endorse these targets and to build on them in the years ahead.

281. **Specifically, I urge the Summit to adopt the target of reducing by half, between now and 2015, the proportion of people who lack sustainable access to adequate sources of affordable and safe water.**

282. To arrest the unsustainable exploitation of water resources, we require water management strategies at national level and local levels. They should include pricing structures that promote both equity and efficiency. We need a "Blue Revolution" in agriculture that focuses on increasing productivity per unit of water — "more crop per drop" — together with far better watershed and flood plain management. But none of this will happen without public awareness and mobilization campaigns, to bring home to people the extent and causes of current and impending water crises.

## C. Defending the soil

283. In principle, there is no reason why Earth could not support far more than its present population. In reality, however, the distribution of good soils and favourable growing conditions does not match that of populations. Increasing land degradation exacerbates that problem. Nearly 2 billion hectares of land — an area about the combined size of Canada and the United States — is affected by human-induced degradation of soils, putting the livelihoods of nearly 1 billion people at risk. The major culprits are irrigation-induced salinization, soil erosion caused by overgrazing and deforestation, and biodiversity depletion. The direct cost alone, in terms of annual income forgone, has been estimated at more than $40 billion a year.

284. Each year an additional 20 million hectares of agricultural land becomes too degraded for crop production, or is lost to urban sprawl. Yet over the next 30 years the demand for food in the developing countries is expected to double. New land can and will be farmed, but much of it is marginal and, therefore, even more highly susceptible to degradation.

285. Increases in farm productivity, boosted by new high-yield plant varieties and a ninefold increase in fertilizer use, have prevented the Doomsday scenarios of global famine that were predicted in the 1970s — but often at considerable environmental cost. The rate of increase in global agricultural productivity slowed dramatically in the 1990s, and sub-Saharan Africa never enjoyed its benefits. The absence of secure land tenure is also a serious impediment to improved agricultural productivity and soil management.

286. Meanwhile, world population is expected to increase by more than 3 billion by mid-century, with the biggest growth coming in the countries that already contain the largest number of hungry people and the most stressed farmlands.

287. Thus the world faces a real threat to future global food security. Plant scientists currently are unable to repeat the huge gains in plant yields they achieved in recent decades, land degradation is increasing, returns from fertilizer application are diminishing in many areas and there are serious constraints on expanding irrigation.

288. Advances in agricultural biotechnology may help developing countries by creating drought-, salt- and pest-resistant crop varieties. But the environmental impact of biotechnology has yet to be fully evaluated and many questions, in particular those related to biosafety, remain to be answered.

289. **I intend to convene a high-level global public policy network to address these and related controversies concerning the risks and opportunities associated with the increased use of biotechnology and bioengineering.**

290. Of course, not every country has to produce all its own food. Shortfalls in supply can be met by imports from food-surplus countries, an increasingly common practice. But, apart from emergency aid, this is a solution to food production deficits only if the countries and people in need of food have the purchasing power to acquire it. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, no fewer than 82 countries lack those resources.

## D. Preserving forests, fisheries and biodiversity

291. Increasing populations and economic growth continue to drive a seemingly insatiable global demand for forest products. Some 65 million hectares of forest were lost in the developing world between 1990 and 1995 because of over-harvesting, conversion into agricultural land, disease and fire. The high demand for timber in the industrialized countries was a major factor behind this depletion.

292. Nevertheless, growing demand need not necessarily generate ever-greater destruction of forests. Major efficiency gains can be achieved in the production of paper and wood products; greater use of recycling can conserve materials and electronic publishing can save paper. Reforestation provides for future timber needs and helps to absorb carbon from the atmosphere, thus reducing global warming. It enhances flood control and helps to prevent soil erosion.

293. The need to preserve biodiversity is a less self-evident conservation issue than polluted beaches, burning forests or expanding deserts. But it is as critical, if not more so. Conserving agricultural biodiversity is essential for long-term food security, because wild plants are genetic sources of resistance to disease, drought and salinization.

294. Biodiversity is not only important for agriculture. Plant-based medicines provide more than 3 billion people with their primary health care and comprise a multi-billion dollar a year global industry. But as scientific and commercial awareness of the value of plant-based medicines grows, the plants are coming under increasing threat. According to a recent survey of nearly a quarter of a million plant species, one in every eight is at risk of extinction. The survival of some 25 per cent of the world's mammal species and 11 per cent of bird species is also threatened. As long as deforestation, land and water degradation, and monoculture cropping continue to increase, the threats to biodiversity will continue to grow.

295. Ocean fisheries continue to be stressed despite the large number of regulatory agreements in place. Fish catches have increased nearly fivefold during the last half-century, but almost 70 per cent of ocean fisheries are either fully exploited or over-fished. Unregulated, winner-take-all fishing practices using so-called factory ships, often heavily state subsidized, cause overexploitation of ocean fisheries and can also destroy the livelihoods of small fishing communities, particularly in the developing world. Coastal waters can be protected from unregulated foreign fishing fleets, but they confront different threats. Fish breeding stocks and nursery grounds are threatened in many regions by the growing degradation of coral reefs. More than half the world's coral reefs are currently at risk as the result of human activities.

296. The complete collapse of many once-valuable fisheries provides compelling evidence that a more sustainable and equitable ocean governance regime is needed. The importance of conservation is increasingly recognized, but it can flourish only if governments and the fishing industry work cooperatively to support it.

## E. Building a new ethic of global stewardship

297. The ecological crises we confront have many causes. They include poverty, negligence and greed — and above all, failures of governance. These crises do not admit of easy or uniform solutions.

298. Moreover, there is every reason to expect that unpleasant ecological surprises lie ahead. It is worth recalling that neither global warming nor ozone depletion were on the agenda of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. Nor would anyone in 1970 have predicted that the cost of natural disasters would increase 900 per cent between the 1960s and 1990s.

299. It is true that technological breakthroughs that are unimaginable today may solve some of the environmental challenges we confront. Perhaps they will, and we should surely provide incentives to increase the likelihood of their occurring. But it would be foolish to count on them and to continue with business as usual.

300. So the question remains, what should our priorities be? I recommend four.

301. First, major efforts in public education are needed. Real understanding of the challenges we face is alarmingly low. As more and more of us live in cities, insulated from nature, the need for greater awareness grows. Consumers everywhere have to

understand that their choices often have significant environmental consequences.

302. Much of the burden of consciousness-raising to date has fallen on civil society organizations. With energy, commitment, but few resources, non-governmental organizations have advocated environmental issues in public debates almost everywhere. Schools and universities also have a critical role to play in raising public consciousness, and governments themselves must step up their contributions.

303. Second, environmental issues must be fundamentally repositioned in the policy-making process. Governments typically treat the environment as an isolated category, assigned to a relatively junior ministry. This is a major obstacle to achieving sustainable development. Instead, the environment must become better integrated into mainstream economic policy. The surest way to achieve that goal is to modify systems of national accounts so that they begin to reflect true environmental costs and benefits — to move towards "green" accounting.

304. Today, when factories produce goods but in the process pump pollutants into rivers or the atmosphere, national accounts measure the value of the goods but not the costs inflicted by the pollutants. In the long run, these unmeasured costs may greatly exceed the measured short-term benefits. Only when they reflect a fuller accounting can economic policies ensure that development is sustainable.

305. The System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting, pioneered by the United Nations in 1993, is a response to this challenge. It augments traditional national accounts with natural resource and pollution flow accounts. This additional information enables governments to formulate and monitor economic policies more effectively, enact more effective environmental regulations and resource management strategies, and use taxes and subsidies more efficiently.

306. Although this system of green accounting is still a work in progress, it is already employed by national governments. The Government of the Philippines started using it in 1995. Another 20 or so countries, North and South, are using elements of it. I encourage governments to consider this system of green accounting carefully and identify ways to incorporate it into their own national accounts.

307. Third, only governments can create and enforce environmental regulations, and devise more environment-friendly incentives for markets to respond to. To cite but one example, governments can make markets work for the environment by cutting the hundreds of billions of dollars that subsidize environmentally harmful activities each and every year. Another is by making greater use of "green taxes", based on the "polluter pays" principle.

308. Creating new incentives also encourages the emergence of entirely new industries, devoted to achieving greater energy efficiency and other environment-friendly practices. The success of the Montreal Protocol, for instance, has created a large market for ozone-safe refrigerators and air conditioners. Nothing would be more foolish than neglecting the enormously positive role the private sector can play in promoting environmental change.

309. Finally, it is impossible to devise effective environmental policy unless it is based on sound scientific information. While major advances in data collection have been made in many areas, large gaps in our knowledge remain. In particular, there has never been a comprehensive global assessment of the world's major ecosystems. The planned Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a major international collaborative effort to map the health of our planet, is a response to this need. It is supported by many governments, as well as UNEP, UNDP, FAO and UNESCO (see box 10).

310. **I call on Member States to help provide the necessary financial support for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and to become actively engaged in it.**

311. Different regions of the world face very different environmental problems, which require different solutions. But the peoples of our small planet share at least one common view about their predicament: they want their governments to do more to protect their environment. They ask that for themselves, and even more so for their children — and for the future of the planet itself. Given the extraordinary risks humanity confronts, the start of the new century could not be a more opportune time to commit ourselves — peoples as well as governments — to a new ethic of conservation and stewardship.

Box 10

**Why we need a millennium assessment of global ecosystems**

During the past three decades we have become increasingly aware that the natural ecosystems on which human life depends are under threat. But we still lack detailed knowledge of the extent of the damage — or its causes. Indeed in some cases, data on freshwater quality, for example, we now have less information than we did 20 years ago because of short-sighted cuts in environmental monitoring programmes.

Good environmental policy must be based on reliable scientific data. To ensure that this data is available to policy makers we need a truly comprehensive global evaluation of the condition of the five major ecosystems: forests, freshwater systems, grasslands, coastal areas and agroecosystems.

The proposed Millennium Ecosystem Assessment seeks to produce just such an evaluation. An initiative of the World Resources Institute, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme among others, it will draw on and collate existing sources of data and promote new research to fill the missing knowledge gaps.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment promises important benefits to many stakeholders. It will provide the parties to various international ecosystem conventions with access to the data they need to evaluate progress towards meeting convention goals. National governments will gain access to information needed to meet reporting requirements under international conventions. The Assessment will strengthen capacity for integrated ecosystem management policies and provide developing nations with better access to global data sets. The private sector will benefit by being able to make more informed forecasts. And it will provide civil society organizations with the information they need to hold corporations and governments accountable for meeting their environmental obligations.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is an outstanding example of the sort of international scientific and political cooperation that is needed to further the cause of sustainable development.

# VI. Renewing the United Nations

312. The United Nations alone can meet none of the challenges I have described. They affect the entire international community, and they require all of us to do our part. But without a strong and effective Organization, the peoples of the world will find meeting these challenges immeasurably more difficult.

313. Whether the world's peoples have such an organization at their disposal depends ultimately, now as in the past, on the commitment of their governments to it. Now, as then, the Member States are the very foundation of the United Nations.

314. As we prepare for the Millennium Summit, we must reaffirm our founding purposes. But we must also think imaginatively how to strengthen the United Nations so that it can better serve states and people alike in the new era.

315. Today, global affairs are no longer the exclusive province of foreign ministries, nor are states the sole source of solutions for our small planet's many problems. Many diverse and increasingly influential non-state actors have joined with national decision makers to improvise new forms of global governance. The more complex the problem at hand — whether negotiating a ban on landmines, setting limits to emissions that contribute to global warming, or creating an International Criminal Court — the more likely we are to find non-governmental organizations, private sector institutions and multilateral agencies working with sovereign states to find consensus solutions.

316. I believe two strategies will be essential to realize the potential of our Organization in the years ahead.

317. First, while our own resources as an organization are tightly constrained, those of the communities we serve are much greater. We must strive, not to usurp the role of other actors on the world stage, but to become a more effective catalyst for change and coordination among them. Our most vital role will be to stimulate collective action at the global level.

318. Second, the United Nations — like all other institutions in the world today — must fully exploit the great promise of the Information Age. The digital revolution has unleashed an unprecedented wave of technological change. Used responsibly, it can greatly improve our chances of defeating poverty and better meeting our other priority objectives. If this is to happen, we in the United Nations need to embrace the new technologies more wholeheartedly than we have in the past.

## A. Identifying our core strengths

319. When it was created more than half a century ago, in the convulsive aftermath of world war, the United Nations reflected humanity's greatest hopes for a just and peaceful global community. It still embodies that dream. We remain the only global institution with the legitimacy and scope that derive from universal membership, and a mandate that encompasses development, security and human rights as well as the environment. In this sense, the United Nations is unique in world affairs.

320. We are an organization without independent military capability, and we dispose of relatively modest resources in the economic realm. Yet our influence and impact on the world is far greater than many believe to be the case — and often more than we ourselves realize. This influence derives not from any exercise of power, but from the force of the values we represent; our role in helping to establish and sustain global norms; our ability to stimulate global concern and action; and the trust we enjoy for the practical work we do on the ground to improve people's lives.

321. The importance of principles and norms is easily underestimated; but in the decades since the United Nations was created, the spreading acceptance of new norms has profoundly affected the lives of many millions of people. War was once a normal instrument of statecraft; it is now universally proscribed, except in very specific circumstances. Democracy, once challenged by authoritarianism in various guises, has not only prevailed in much of the world, but is now generally seen as the most legitimate and desirable form of government. The protection of fundamental human rights, once considered the province of sovereign states alone, is now a universal concern transcending both governments and borders.

322. The United Nations conferences of the 1990s were sometimes marked by discord, but they have played a central role in forging normative consensus and spelling out practical solutions on the great issues

of the day. Nowhere else has it been possible for the international community as a whole to sketch out responses to the dawning challenge of globalization on which all, or almost all, could agree. Indeed, it is on those responses that this report seeks to build.

323. More recently we have seen an upsurge of transnational single-issue campaigns to strengthen norms and build legal regimes, leading for instance to the convention banning landmines or to last year's agreement on enhanced debt relief for the most heavily indebted poor countries. These campaigns, often conducted in concert with the United Nations, have helped to raise — and alter — the consciousness of the international community and to change the behaviour of states on many critical global issues.

324. The United Nations plays an equally important, but largely unsung, role in creating and sustaining the global rules without which modern societies simply could not function. The World Health Organization, for example, sets quality criteria for the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. The World Meteorological Office collates weather data from individual states and redistributes it, which in turn improves global weather forecasting. The World Intellectual Property Organization protects trademarks and patents outside their country of origin. The rights for commercial airlines to fly over borders derive from agreements negotiated by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The United Nations Statistical Commission helps secure uniformity in accounting standards.

325. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine our globalized world without the principles and practice of multilateralism to underpin it. An open world economy, in the place of mercantilism; a gradual decrease in the importance of competitive military alliances coupled with a Security Council more often able to reach decisions; the General Assembly or great gatherings of states and civil society organizations addressing humanity's common concerns — these are some of the signs, partial and halting though they may be, of an indispensable multilateral system in action.

326. Taking a long-term view, the expansion of the rule of law has been the foundation of much of the social progress achieved in the last millennium. Of course, this remains an unfinished project, especially at the international level, and our efforts to deepen it continue. Support for the rule of law would be enhanced if countries signed and ratified international treaties and conventions. Some decline to do so for reasons of substance, but a far greater number simply lack the necessary expertise and resources, especially when national legislation is needed to give force to international instruments.

327. Therefore, I am asking all relevant United Nations entities to provide the necessary technical assistance that will make it possible for every willing state to participate fully in the emerging global legal order.

328. **We will provide special facilities at the Millennium Summit for Heads of State or Government to add their signatures to any treaty or convention of which the Secretary-General is the depositary.**

329. As global norms evolve, institutions have evolved with them. In recent years, for example, we have witnessed the creation of ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, in response to the international community's growing concern about gross violations of human rights and its determination to end the "culture of impunity".

330. **I strongly urge all countries to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, so as to consolidate and extend the gains we have achieved in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity.**

331. The United Nations must also adapt itself to the changing times. One critical area, to which I have already referred, is reform of the Security Council. The Council must work effectively, but it must also enjoy unquestioned legitimacy. Those two criteria define the space within which a solution must be found. **I urge Member States to tackle this challenge without delay.**

332. We also need to adapt our deliberative work so that it can benefit fully from the contributions of civil society. Already, civil society organizations have made an important contribution to articulating and defending global norms. (For the number of non-governmental organizations, see fig. 13.) It is clear that the United Nations and the world's people have much to gain from opening the Organization further to this vital source of energy and expertise — just as we have gained from closer institutional links and practical cooperation with national parliaments.

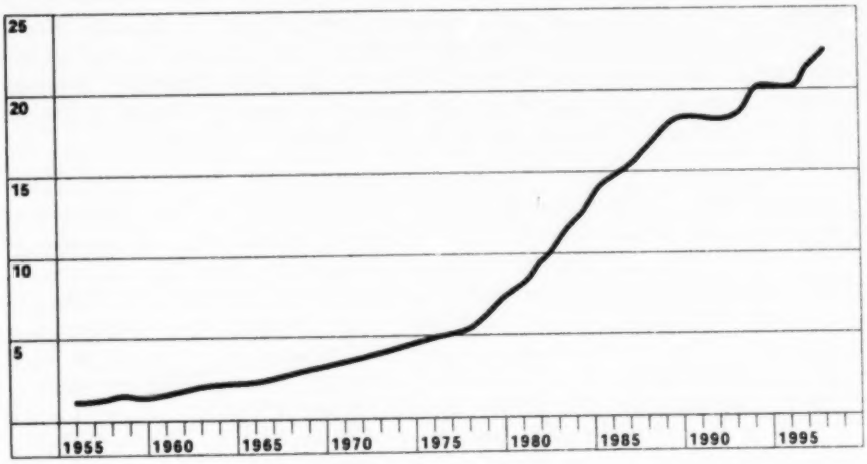



**Figure 13**
**Number of international non-governmental organizations**
(Thousands)

*Source*: Union of International Organizations and World Watch Institute, 1996-1999.

333. **I would ask the General Assembly, therefore, to explore ways of improving these relationships. As a first step, an expert group, including representatives of civil society organizations, might be asked to prepare a study of innovative "best practices" in how those organizations contribute to the work of the United Nations in all its aspects. Such a study could form the basis for adopting new ways of involving civil society more fully in our common endeavours.**

334. Partnerships with the private sector and foundations have also become extremely important to our recent successes, as I have noted in several instances in this report.

## B. Networking for change

335. The rapid pace of change today frequently exceeds the capacity of national and international institutions to adapt. So many things are changing at once that no organization on its own can keep track of them all — especially as the changes generally cut across traditional boundaries between academic disciplines and professional fields of expertise.

336. Part of the solution may be found in the emergence of "global policy networks". These networks — or coalitions for change — bring together international institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, and national governments, in pursuit of common goals.

337. Sometimes international organizations are in the lead — the World Health Organization, for example, in the Roll Back Malaria campaign, or my own office in the case of the Global Compact with the private sector.

338. In other instances a few national governments and non-governmental organizations are the driving force, as was the case with the campaign to ban landmines. In the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization the private sector and philanthropic foundations are the major players. In every case, these loose creative coalitions give new meaning to the phrase "we the peoples", by showing that global governance is not a zero-sum game. All the partners in such a network see their influence increase.

339. States, in particular, gain from joining global policy networks because they can achieve cooperatively what is impossible unilaterally.

340. Though they can take many different forms, global policy networks share a number of characteristics. They are non-hierarchical and give voice to civil society. They help set global policy agendas, frame debates and raise public consciousness. They develop and disseminate knowledge, making extensive use of the Internet. They make it easier to reach consensus and negotiate agreements on new global standards, as well as to create new kinds of mechanisms for implementing and monitoring those agreements.

341. Our involvement with global policy networks has been extensive but largely unplanned. We need a more focused and systematic approach. We need to determine how best to help governments, civil society and the private sector to work together to ensure that policy networks succeed in achieving their — and our — goals.

## C. Making digital connections

342. Earlier in this report, I discussed the vital importance of bridging the global digital divide. Here, I want to suggest how the Information Revolution can and must benefit the United Nations itself.

343. Ten years ago getting information from — or to — the developing world was costly and time-consuming. But today the World Wide Web is changing that. We can now read newspapers on-line from every corner of the world within seconds of their publication. We can find and download information from national government departments, leading overseas research institutions and key non-governmental organizations just as quickly.

344. This is not all. Increased global connectivity also means that every year the vast electronic treasure house of information available on the United Nations web site becomes accessible at no cost to millions more people. The popularity of our web site is extraordinary — it received more than 100 million "hits" last year.

345. The Internet also makes it possible for us to hold interactive global electronic conferences, which not only save airfares, hotel bills and conference costs, but can as easily and cheaply host 10,000 participants as 10. Within the Secretariat, we can substitute electronic "meetings" for many face-to-face ones, thereby making far more efficient use of staff time. This is increasingly the practice in modern organizations that have embraced the Information Revolution.

346. Finally, the Information Revolution has the potential to radically improve the efficiency of our field operations. Wireless communications work even under the worst conditions, including natural disasters and emergencies.

347. **I am pleased to announce the launch of a new disaster response programme, which will provide and maintain mobile and satellite telephones as well as microwave links for humanitarian relief workers.**

348. This initiative will be led by Ericsson, in partnership with United Nations entities and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (see box 11).

349. Logistical planning and operations in complex emergencies can also benefit from better use of available technology. In Kosovo, for example, the International Rescue Committee created a shared satellite/wireless Internet network in Pristina. Every United Nations agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, several national missions and the majority of non-governmental organizations are connected via the network around the clock.

350. Up to now, however, the United Nations has scarcely tapped the potential of the Information Revolution. We remain handicapped by a change-resistant culture, inadequate information technology infrastructure, lack of training and, above all, failure to understand the great benefits that information technology can provide when used creatively. We need to update and upgrade our internal information technology capacity. There is enormous scope for the entire United Nations system to become better integrated, on-line, providing the world's people with information and data of concern to them.

351. In cooperation with other members of the United Nations family, I shall pursue these objectives with great vigour. I will also be appealing to the information technology industry for assistance in rebuilding the United Nations information technology infrastructure and capacity.

## D. Advancing the quiet revolution

352. If the international community were to create a new United Nations tomorrow, its make-up would surely be different from the one we have. In 2000, our structure reflects decades of mandates conferred by Member States and, in some cases, the legacy of deep political disagreements. While there is widespread consensus on the need to make the United Nations a more modern and flexible organization, unless Member States are willing to contemplate **real structural reform**, there will continue to be severe limits to what we can achieve.

353. When the scope of our responsibilities and the hopes invested in us are measured against our resources, we confront a sobering truth. The budget for our core functions — the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna and five regional commissions — is just $1.25 billion a year. That is about 4 per cent of New York City's annual budget — and nearly a billion dollars less than the annual cost of running Tokyo's Fire Department. Our resources simply are not commensurate with our global tasks.

Box 11
**First on the Ground: communications in disaster relief operations**

The dramatic growth in the scope and severity of natural disasters over the past three decades has placed ever-increasing demands on disaster relief organizations. To meet these demands, disaster relief operations have become larger and more complex, involving increasing numbers of players. This in turn has increased demand for more effective communications in the field.

Local communication systems are often extensively damaged in disasters. Unfortunately the communication systems used by different agencies and non-governmental organizations vary widely in quality and often suffer compatibility problems. The need for improvement is widely recognized, but for many agencies and non-governmental organizations acquisition of more effective systems has simply been too costly.

Responding to this challenge the Ericsson corporation has launched a major Disaster Response Programme that, among other initiatives, will provide and maintain mobile and satellite phones to agency and local humanitarian relief workers. The company will help install microwave links and other measures to improve existing communication networks — or it will build new ones where none exists. The Disaster Response Programme will rely heavily on support from Ericsson's offices in more than 140 countries worldwide and will focus on disaster preparation as well as response.

This generous exercise in global corporate citizenship and private-public cooperation will greatly benefit United Nations agencies and their partners and help improve the provision of services to disaster victims everywhere.

354. Our difficulties in coping with stagnant budgets and non-payment of dues are well known. Less well understood are the strains that Member States impose on us by adding new mandates without adding new resources. We can do more with less, but only up to a point. Sooner or later the quality of our work must suffer.

355. The constraints are not only financial. In many areas we cannot do our job because disagreements among Member States preclude the consensus needed for effective action. This is perhaps most obvious with respect to peace operations, but it affects other areas as well. Moreover, the highly intrusive and excessively detailed mode of oversight that Member States exercise over our programme activities makes it very difficult for us to maximize efficiency or effectiveness.

356. The "quiet revolution I launched in 1997 was designed to make the United Nations a leaner and more effective organization. Since then we have streamlined management procedures, shifted resources from administration to development work, introduced cabinet-style management and greatly improved coordination among the far-flung members of the United Nations family.

357. To reduce the built-in bias towards institutional inertia that has afflicted our work, and to facilitate the strategic redeployment of resources, I have proposed **time limits or "sunset provisions"** for initiatives involving new organizational structures or major commitments of funds. The General Assembly has not yet accepted this proposal; **I urge it to do so.**

358. Furthermore, a more people-oriented United Nations must be a more **results-based organization**, both in its staffing and its allocation of resources. We are making slow progress in the direction of a results-based budgeting system, one focused on outcomes rather than inputs and processes. When fully implemented this will encourage greater efficiency and flexibility, while at the same time enhancing transparency and the Secretariat's accountability to Member States. **Here, too, the General Assembly's support is necessary.**

359. To sum up, the United Nations of the twenty-first century must continue to be guided by its founding principles. It must remain an Organization dedicated to the interests of its Member States and of their peoples. Our objectives will not change: peace, prosperity, social justice and a sustainable future. But the means we use to achieve those ends must be adapted to the challenges of the new era.

360. In future, the United Nations must increasingly serve as a catalyst for collective action, both among its Member States and between them and the vibrant constellation of new non-state actors. We must continue to be the place where new standards of international conduct are hammered out, and broad consensus on them is established. We must harness the power of technology to improve the fortunes of developing countries. Finally, we ourselves, as an organization, must become more effective, efficient, and accessible to the world's peoples. When we fail, we must be our own most demanding critics.

361. Only by these means can we become a global public trust for all the world's peoples.

## VII. For consideration by the Summit

362. The purposes and principles of the United Nations are set out clearly in the Charter, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their relevance and capacity to inspire have in no way diminished. If anything they have increased, as peoples have become interconnected in new ways, and the need for collective responsibility at the global level has come to be more widely felt. The following values, which reflect the spirit of the Charter, are — I believe — shared by all nations, and are of particular importance for the age we are now entering:

**Freedom**. Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and squalor and from the fear of violence or oppression. These rights are best assured by representative government, based on the will of the people.

**Equity and solidarity**. No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from globalization. Global risks must be managed in a way that shares the costs and burdens fairly. Those who suffer, or who benefit least, are entitled to help from those who benefit most.

**Tolerance**. Human beings must respect each other, in all their diversity of faith, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished.

**Non-violence**. Disputes between and within nations should be resolved by peaceful means, except where use of force is authorized by the Charter.

**Respect for nature**. Prudence should be shown in handling all living species and natural resources. Only so can the immeasurable riches we inherit from nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants.

**Shared responsibility**. States must act together to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter. The management of risks and threats that affect all the world's peoples should be considered multilaterally.

* * *

363. In applying these values to the new century, our priorities must be clear.

364. **First, we must spare no effort to free our fellow men and women from the abject and dehumanizing poverty** in which more than 1 billion of them are currently confined. Let us resolve therefore:

- To halve, by the time this century is 15 years old, the proportion of the world's people (currently 22 per cent) whose income is less than one dollar a day.
- To halve, by the same date, the proportion of people (currently 20 per cent) who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water.
- That by the same date all children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
- That by then we will have halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- That, by 2020, we will have achieved significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers around the world.
- To develop strategies that will give young people everywhere the chance of finding decent work.
- To ensure that the benefits of new technology, especially information technology, are available to all.
- That every national government will from now on commit itself to national policies and programmes directed specifically at reducing poverty, to be developed and applied in consultation with civil society.

At the international level, the more fortunate countries owe a duty of solidarity to the less fortunate. Let them resolve therefore:

- To grant free access to their markets for goods produced in poor countries — and, as a first step, to be prepared, at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in March 2001, to adopt a policy of duty-free and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries.

- To remove the shackles of debt which currently keep many of the poorest countries imprisoned in their poverty — and, as first steps, to implement the expansion of the debt relief programme for heavily indebted poor countries agreed last year without further delay, and to be prepared to cancel all official debts of the heavily indebted poor countries, in return for those countries making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction.

- To grant more generous development assistance, particularly to those countries which are genuinely applying their resources to poverty reduction.

- To work with the pharmaceutical industry and other partners to develop an effective and affordable vaccine against HIV; and to make HIV-related drugs more widely accessible in developing countries.

At both the national and international levels, private investment has an indispensable role to play. Let us resolve therefore:

- To develop strong partnerships with the private sector to combat poverty in all its aspects.

Extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa affects a higher proportion of the population than in any other region. It is compounded by a higher incidence of conflict, HIV/AIDS and many other ills. Let us resolve therefore:

- That in all our efforts we will make special provision for the needs of Africa, and give our full support to Africans in their struggle to overcome the continent's problems.

For my part, I have announced four new initiatives in the course of this report:

- A Health InterNetwork, to provide hospitals and clinics in developing countries with access to up-to-date medical information.

- A United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS), to train groups in developing countries in the uses and opportunities of information technology.

- A disaster response initiative, "First on the Ground", which will provide uninterrupted communications access to areas affected by natural disasters and emergencies.

- A global policy network to explore viable new approaches to the problem of youth employment.

365. **Second, we must spare no effort to free our fellow men and women from the scourge of war** — as the Charter requires us to do — and especially from the violence of civil conflict and the fear of weapons of mass destruction, which are the two great sources of terror in the present age. Let us resolve therefore:

- To strengthen respect for law, in international as in national affairs, in particular the agreed provisions of treaties on the control of armaments, and international humanitarian and human rights law. I invite all governments that have not done so to sign and ratify the various conventions, covenants and treaties which form the central corpus of international law.

- To make the United Nations more effective in its work of maintaining peace and security, notably by

  - Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to conduct peace operations.

  - Adopting measures to make economic sanctions adopted by the Security Council less harsh on innocent populations, and more effective in penalizing delinquent rulers.

- To take energetic action to curb the illegal traffic in small arms, notably by

  - Creating greater transparency in arms transfers.

  - Supporting regional disarmament measures, such as the moratorium on the importing, exporting or manufacturing of light weapons in West Africa.

  - Extending to other areas — especially post-conflict situations — the "weapons for goods" programmes that have worked well in Albania, El Salvador, Mozambique and Panama.

- To examine the possibility of convening a major international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

366. **Third, we must spare no effort to free our fellow men and women, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the danger of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources can no longer provide for their needs**. Given the extraordinary risks humanity confronts, let us resolve:

- To adopt a new ethic of conservation and stewardship; and, as first steps:
  - To adopt and ratify the Kyoto Protocol, so that it can enter into force by 2002, and to ensure that its goals are met, as a step towards reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.
  - To consider seriously incorporating the United Nations system of "green accounting" into national accounts.
  - To provide financial support for, and become actively engaged in, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

367. **Finally, we must spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples** for pursuing all three of these priorities — the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against violence and terror; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home. Let us resolve therefore:

- To reform the Security Council, in a way that both enables it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively and gives it greater legitimacy in the eyes of all the world's peoples.
- To ensure that the Organization is given the necessary resources to carry out its mandates.
- To ensure that the Secretariat makes best use of those resources in the interests of all Member States, by allowing it to adopt the best management practices and technologies available, and to concentrate on those tasks that reflect the current priorities of Member States.
- To give full opportunities to non-governmental organizations and other non-state actors to make their indispensable contribution to the Organization's work.

* * *

368. I believe that these priorities are clear, and that all these things are achievable if we have the will to achieve them. For many of the priorities, strategies have already been worked out, and are summarized in this report. For others, what is needed first is to apply our minds, our energies and our research budgets to an intensive quest for workable solutions.

369. No state and no organization can solve all these problems by acting alone. Nor however, should any state imagine that others will solve them for it, if its own government and citizens do not apply themselves wholeheartedly to the task. Building a twenty-first century safer and more equitable than the twentieth is a task that requires the determined efforts of every state and every individual. In inspiring and coordinating those efforts, a renewed United Nations will have a vital and exalting role to play.